

no. *Thimble*

AN

ENQUIRY



Methodist Episcopacy;

WITH AN

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

TWO ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS,

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

~~~~~  
BY AN EPISCOPALIAN

OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND.  
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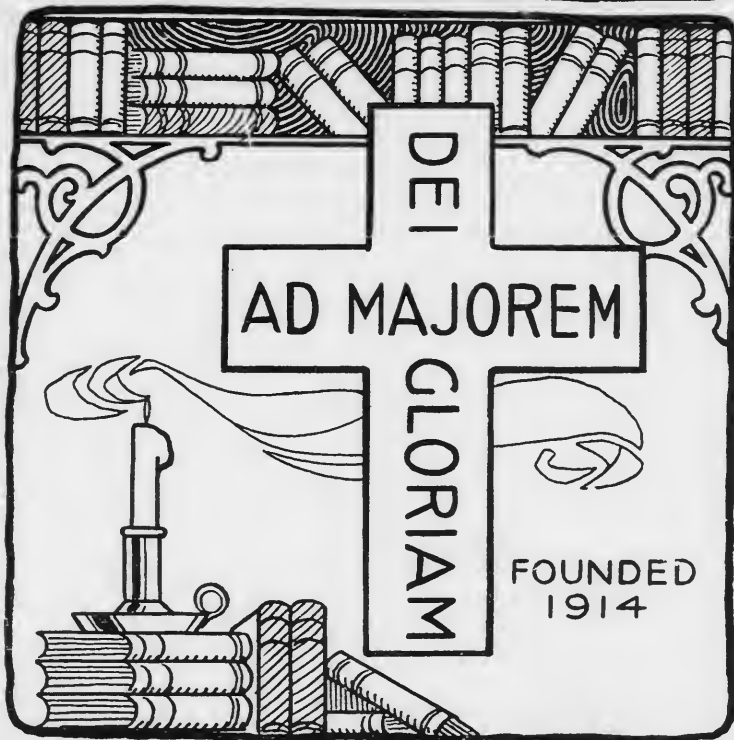
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To Mr. FRANCIS ASBURY, Superior of the Methodist Society in
 the United States.

Sir,

Permit me, without incurring your displeasure, to request your attentive perusal of the following pages, on a subject which demands a close and thorough investigation. As I have adduced no facts but such as have been already made known to the world by writers, whose veracity in stating circumstances well known by them to have happened, it would be unjust to call in question, I shall offer no apology for the omission of my name both on the title page, and at the close of this dedicatory address. For, if such men as *Coke, Myles, Whitehead, Hampton, Nott, J. and C. Wesley, Lavington, &c.* are not esteemed by you and other readers, competent or honest enough to give a true statement of occurrences in which some of them were personally engaged, I cannot have the vanity to suppose my humble name sufficient to stamp those narrations with the uncontroverted mark of authenticity.

If therefore any difficulties should arise respecting the facts stated, it will belong to those writers on whose credibility I have relied, to remove them, and not to me. The case is indeed somewhat different in regard to the deductions I have made from an examination of those facts, yet even here, my name cannot give value to false reasoning, nor detract from the weight of just conclusions. Of these things my readers are the proper judges. For these I only request a candid and impartial consideration. But should you still be disposed to censure me for not openly discovering myself, I shall desire you to look into a pamphlet written professedly in your defence by Mr. Nicholas Snethen, entitled "*An Answer to James O'Kelly, &c.*" where the following sentiment is advanced by your advocate. "The merits of a book and the true state of facts are not to be determined by a knowledge of the name, or character of a writer."

From a consideration of several of the facts stated by the above-mentioned writers I became convinced, some few years ago, of the nullity of Methodist Episcopacy and the ordinations thereon depending. This conviction, in concurrence with other circumstances not now necessary to be mentioned, but which may probably furnish matter for another pamphlet, obliged me in consci-

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ence to withdraw from your society, which I had but for a short time been connected with as a preacher upon trial. This step drew down upon me the wrathful ire and indignation of many of your satellites, who have unceasingly been pursuing me with abuse, and exhibiting a conduct towards me totally inconsistent with the spirit of that gospel of which they are such loud professors. Pray, sir, is such conduct in your preachers sanctioned by you? Are you a countenancer of that rancorous disposition shewn by the majority of the teachers and members of your society towards all, who from motives for which they are not accountable to you, are pleased to withdraw themselves from your communion. You are ready, I doubt not, to reply in the negative. But, sir, as I know your power and influence, if you do not check this bitter spirit—I cannot but look upon you as guilty by connivance at least, and that you would wish such conduct to be esteemed as an unequivocal declaration to all Methodists, “*To beware how they venture to examine or think for themselves; for, that once a Methodist always a Methodist, or woe to their reputation.*”

In early youth, the power of influence, the arts of plausibility, and flattering persuasions and promises, were an overmatch for childish ignorance and inexperience, and drew me into error. In a more advanced age, a season of corporeal and mental affliction prepared me to fall an easy prey into the snares of enthusiasm, specious professions and confident assertions. I have been in error I confess, but insincerity never added to its aggravation. To err, however, I esteem, no disgrace, while the error is involuntary; but to persist in error, in spite of conviction, is something worse than disgraceful. It constitutes a crime of a very deep dye indeed. In these sentiments, I doubt not, I have your full concurrence.

Let me, therefore, indulge a hope, that, should you be convinced of the errors of Methodism, you will renounce them as I have done; and use all your influence to put an end to the “*Schism*,” and to lead your mistaken brethren back to the unity of the Church, whose children will all sincerely rejoice to learn you have regained your once exceeding strong attachment unto her.

From the nature of the facts I had to consider, the positions to controvert, and the errors to detect, which were so very plentifully scattered through the pieces of the nameless assaulter of the Church, and champion of Methodism, published last year in the Republican Star printed at Easton in Maryland, and which gave rise to the present treatise, I have been obliged to adopt a language, which you will probably think, not sufficiently respectful: but be assured, sir, that I have endeavoured, with what success I am not the proper judge, to preserve as much charity, good will and moderation, as is consistent with a zealous defence of the

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truth, an exposure of specious error, and a detection of brilliant, but vapoury pretensions. I can never reconcile it to myself to pay that respect to falshood, which is due only to truth, nor to reverence the worship of vain illusions and fanatical reveries, as the true religion of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

To you, sir, and to Dr. Coke in your private capacities, I would wish to shew all due respect; it is solely as founders, governors and propagators of a *new gospel*, a *new church*, and a *new communion*, claiming the name of Episcopal, and arrogating to itself not only an *ordinary episcopate*, but an *extraordinary, apostolic and divine* foundation, that I presume to enquire into the reality of your pretensions. And in so doing no one can blame me, who does not reject the apostolic precept which says, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God."

Should you be inclined to publish any more statements of the numbers of converts made at camp meetings, I would advise you to apply to Mr. Ffirth of New-Jersey, who published an account of one which took place last summer in Queen Ann's county, Maryland. At the place where the camp was held the most violent adherents to Methodism asserted the number of converts to be only about 300; the tenth part of which number I apprehend, from a knowledge of the country thereabouts, to be highest the real number; Yet, Mr. F—— scrupled not to inform the public through the medium of the Aurora, that upwards of eleven hundred were then & there converted! What an adept in the science of multiplication! Pray, sir, was not your late letter from Lambert Hall, first cousin to Mr. Ffirth's publication? It appears you had your information from the elder of the Chesapeak, or the elder of the Delaware districts, those great and learned historians of the supernatural effects of camp meetings upon *Flies* and *Musquitoes*. But, sir, the world, at least that part of it which is not in a state of mental intoxication, will require you to produce better authority than those gentlemen, if you expect your statement to be credited. Their credulity in the above instance, to give it the softest name, must render them utterly incompetent to bear testimony to the reality of conversions.

I shall now close this address by requesting, that, whatever impressions the reading of the following pages may make on your mind, you will at least inculcate the necessity of adhering strictly to the advice of Mr. John Wesley implied and expressed in the two following extracts from his works.

The first is to be found in his notes on the New Testament 1st Corinthians, 14th chap. 32d verse.

"And the spirit of the prophets, are subject to the prophets."
"But what enthusiast considers this? The impulse of the Holy Spirit, even in men truly inspired, so suit themselves to their rational faculties as not to divest them of the government of themselves, like the Heathen priests under their diabolical pos-

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“sessions. Evil spirits threw their prophets into such ungovernable extacies as forced them to speak and act like madmen. But the spirit of God let his prophets the clear use of their judgment, when, and how long it was fit for them to speak, and never hurried them, into any improprieties either as to matter, manner, or time of their speaking.”

The second is taken from Mr. Wesley's treatise on Christian perfection usually annexed to the book of Methodist discipline.

“Beware of that daughter of pride, enthusiasm! O keep at the utmost distance from it: give no place to an heated imagination. Do not hastily ascribe things to God. Do not easily suppose dreams, voices, visions and revelations to be from God. They may be from him, they may be from nature, they may be from the devil. Therefore, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God. You are in danger of enthusiasm every hour, if you depart ever so little from scripture, or from the plain literal meaning of any text, taken in connection with the context. And so you are, if you dispise, or lightly esteem reason, knowledge, or human learning: every one of which is an excellent gift of god, & may serve the noblest purposes”——“I say yet again, beware of enthusiasm. Beware of Judging people to be right or wrong, by your own feelings. This is no scriptural way of judging. O keep close to the law and to the testimony.” *O si sic omnia.*

You will soon perceive, sir, that I judge Methodist Episcopacy to be an imposition on the world. But to you, in your private capacity, I am ever ready to shew all proper respect.

Accept, Sir, this expression of regard,
From your humble servant

THE AUTHOR.

Eastern Shore, Maryland, April 27th, 1807.

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PREFACE.

THE Methodists, in the United States of America; having formed themselves into an independent church, which, in their *authorised* publications, is called "*The Methodist Episcopal Church*;" in which three distinct orders of ministers of the word and sacraments are recognized, viz. *Bishops, Elders and Deacons*; it must be a matter of some importance, to know on what authority they acted in an affair of such magnitude, and whence they derived their episcopacy and powers of ordination.

I have been induced to enquire into this subject in consequence of a controversy which during last summer was published in the *Republican Star*, printed at Easton in Maryland. As newspaper publications are soon forgot, I judged a correct statement of facts relative to Methodist ordinations might assist every enquirer to determine in what light those ordinations ought to be considered. This statement I have made in the following pages, collecting my information chiefly from the writings of eminent Methodists, and at the same time making such remarks as I conceived the facts related would justify me in making.

It is a principle universally established among Episcopalians, that a succession from the apostles in the order of bishops, as an order superior to, and distinct from presbyters, is a requisite without which a valid Christian ministry cannot be preserved, and, that such bishops alone possess the power of ordaining and commissioning ministers to feed the flock of Christ. Now, the pretensions of the Methodists, must be examined according to Episcopalian principles, because they have adopted the Episcopalian mode of church government, and, in the most solemn manner declared it to be the *most excellent*.

If, therefore, their episcopacy and ordinations will not abide the Episcopalian test, they cannot expect Episcopalians to recognize their ordinations as valid, or that they should acknowledge the Methodist body as an Episcopalian church; neither ought the Methodists to be offended at the charge of Schism when brought against them by those who believe no true church can exist without a true Episcopacy, and that no Episcopacy can be a true one, but that which is derived from the holy apostles in the order of bishops, as superior to, and distinct from the order of presbyters.

My design in this publication is to furnish my brethren of the Episcopalian church with a correct account of Methodist ordination, and to shew the difference between a *true and valid* Episcopacy, and that which is only *nominally* an Episcopacy ; in order that they may be upon their guard, and not suffer themselves to be seduced from the communion of a truly apostolic church, to embrace that of one, whose foundation is merely a human device.

N. L.

The Methodist Episcopacy, &c.

CHAPTER I.

IT is well known that before the revolutionay war which terminated in an entire separation of the United States from the mother country, the Methodist preachers were all laymen. They neither administered the sacrament, nor celebrated the rites of marriage; they were considered in no other light than as preachers of a religious society composed chiefly of members of the Episcopal church, then called "The Church of England." They disclaimed the name of dissenters, as strenuously as the founder of their society had done, who, in his "*Farther appeal to men of reason and religion*," p. 134, addressed the members of the Church of England in the following words:—

"We do not dispute concerning any of the *externals* or *circumstantials* of religion. There is no room; for we agree with you therein. We approve of, we adhere to them all; all that we learned together when we were children, in our *catechism*, and *common prayer book*. We were born and bread up in your own *Church*, and desire to die therein. We always were, and are now zealous for the church; only not with a blind angry zeal. We hold and ever have done, the same opinions which you and we received from our forefathers. But we do not lay the main stress of our religion on any opinions, right or wrong: neither do we ever begin, or willingly join in any dispute concerning them. The right of all religion, we apprehend, rests on holiness of heart and life. And consequently, wherever we come, we press this with all our might. How wide then is the difference between our case, and the case of those (*Dissenters*) above mentioned? They *avowedly separated* from the Church, we utterly disavowed any such design. They severely, and almost continually inveighed against the *doctrines* and *discipline* of the church they left. We approve both the *doctrines* and *discipline* of our Church, and inveigh only against ungodliness and unrighteousness. They spent great part of their time and strength in contending about *externals* and *circumstantials*. We agree with you in both; so that having no

“reason to spend any time in such vain contention, we have our
 “desire in spending and being spent, in promoting plain practical
 “religion.”

These are the declarations and protestations of the late Rev. John Wesley : and to these, his followers in America very generally yielded assent.

He also published a number of reasons against separating from the Church, which are as follows.

WESLEY'S REASONS FOR NOT SEPARATING FROM THE CHURCH.

BECAUSE it would be a contradiction to the solemn and repeated declarations which we have made in all manner of ways, in preaching, in print and in private conversation.

Because on this, as well as many other accounts, it would give huge occasion of offence to those who seek and desire occasion ; to all the enemies of God and truth.

Because it would exceedingly prejudice against us many who fear, yea, who love God ; and thereby hinder their receiving so much, perhaps any further benefit from our preaching.

Because it would hinder multitudes of those who neither love nor fear God, from hearing us at all.

Because it would be throwing balls of wild fire among them that are now quiet in the land. We are now sweetly united together in love. We mostly think and speak the same thing. But this would occasion inconceivable strife and contention between those who left and those who remained in the church, as well as between those who left us, and those that remained with us : nay, and between those very persons who remained, as they were variously inclined one way or the other.

Because, to form the plan of a new church, would require infinite time and care, (which might be far more profitably bestowed) with much more wisdom, and greater depth and extensiveness of thought than any of us are masters of.

Because, from some having barely entertained a distant thought of this, evil fruits have already followed ; such as prejudice against the clergy in general, and aptness to believe ill of them ; contempt not without a degree of bitterness, of clergymen, as such ; and a sharpness of language towards the whole order, utterly unbecoming either gentlemen or Christians.

Because we have melancholy instances of this, even before our eyes. Many have, in our memory, left the church, and formed themselves into distinct bodies. And certainly some of them from a real persuasion, that they should do God more service. But have any separated themselves and prospered ? have they been either more holy, or more useful than they were before ?

Because by such a separation we should not only throw away the peculiar glorifying which God has given us, “ That we do and will suffer all things for our brethren’s sake, though the

more we love them, the less we be loved ;” but should act in *direct contradiction to that very end, for which we believe God hath raised us up.* The chief design of his providence in sending us out, is undoubtedly to quicken our brethern. And the first message of all our preachers, is, to the lost sheep of the church of England. Now would it not be a flat contradiction to this design, to separate from the church? These things being considered, we cannot apprehend (whether it be lawful in itself or no) that it is lawful to us ; were it only on this ground, that it is by no means expedient.

It has indeed been objected, that till we do separate, we cannot be a compact, united body.

It is true, we cannot till then be a compact united body, if you mean by that expression, a body distinct from all others ; and we have no desire to be so.

We look upon ourselves, not as the authors or ringleaders of a particular sect or party ; it is the farthest thing from our thoughts ; but as messengers of God to those who are Christians in name, but Heathens in heart and life ; to call them back to that from which they are fallen, to real, genuine Christianity. We are therefore debtors to all of them, of whatever opinion and denomination ; and are consequently to do all that in us lies, to please all for their good to edification.

We look upon the *Methodists*, so called, in general, not as any particular party ; (this would exceedingly obstruct the grand design for which we conceive God has raised them up)—but as living witnesses in, and to every party, of that Christianity which we preach ; which is hereby demonstrated to be a real thing, and visibly held out to all the world.

We look upon the clergy, not only as a part of our brethren, but as that part whom God, by his adorable providence, has called to be watchmen over the rest, for whom therefore they are to give a strict account. If these men neglect their important charge ; if they do not watch over them with all their power, they will be of all men most miserable, and so are entitled to our deepest compassion. So that to feel, and much more to express either contempt or bitterness towards them, betrays an utter ignorance of ourselves and of the spirit which we especially should be of.

Might it not be at least a prudential rule, for every Methodist preacher, not to frequent any dissenting meeting? Though we blame none who have always been accustomed to it. But if we do this, certainly our people will. *Now this is actually separating from the Church.* If, therefore, it is, at least, not expedient to separate, *neither is this expedient.* Indeed, we may attend our assemblies and the church too, because they are at different hours. But we cannot attend both the meeting and the church, because

they are at the same hours. If it be said, "But at the church, we are fed with chaff; whereas, at the meeting we have wholesome food:" We answer; 1st. The prayers of the church are not chaff; they are substantial food for any who are alive to God. 2d. The Lord's supper is not chaff, but pure and wholesome for all who receive it with upright hearts. Yea. 3d. In almost all the sermons we hear there, we hear many great and important truths. And whoever has a spiritual discernment may easily separate the chaff from the wheat therein. 4th. How little is the case mended at the meeting? Either the teachers are new-light-men, denying the Lord that bought them, and overturning his gospel from the very foundation; or they are predestinarians, and so preach predestination and final perseverance more or less. Now, whatever this may be to them that were educated therein, yet to those of our brethren who have lately embraced it, repeated experience shows it is not wholesome food; rather to them it has the effect of deadly poison. In a short time it destroys all their zeal for God. They grow fond of opinions and strife of words. They despise self denial and the daily cross; and to complete all, wholly separate from their brethren.

Nor is it expedient for any Methodist preacher to imitate the dissenters in their manner of praying: neither in his *tone*; all particular tones, both in preaching and praying, should be avoided with the utmost care. Nor in his *language*; all his words should be plain and simple, such as the lowest of his hearers both use and understand. Nor in the length of his prayer, which should not usually exceed four or five minutes, either before or after sermon.

If we continue in the church, not by chance or for want of thought, but upon solid and well weighed reasons, then we should never speak contemptuously of the church, or any thing pertaining to it. In some sense, it is the mother of us all, who have been brought up therein.

In order to cut off all jealousy and suspicion from our friends, and hope from our enemies, of our having any design to separate from the church, it would be well for every Methodist preacher, who has no scruple concerning it, to attend the service of the church as often as conveniently he can. And the more we attend it, the more we love it, as constant experience shows. On the contrary, the longer we abstain from it, the less desire we have to attend it at all.

From these sentiments of Mr. Wesley we may learn that the Methodists were, originally, both in England and America, merely a religious society in communion with the church of England.

The progress of their separation in the United States, may be traced in their own popular publications ; from which we may easily obtain sufficient information to enable us to judge how far they have a right to the title of an episcopal church, and also, how far their claim to an episcopal ordination, is just.

The first symptoms of separation from the church, and assumption of the power of ordination that we hear of, in the United States, took place during the revolutionary war, and is thus described by Dr. Coke and Mr. More in their "*Life of Wesley*," p. 350 and 351.

"During the civil war the societies were destitute of the sacraments, excepting two or three of the cities. They could not obtain baptism for their children, or the Lords supper for themselves, from the Presbyterian, Independent or Baptist ministers, but on condition that they would leave the *society* of which they were members, and join those *churches* respectively; and many of the clergy of the church of England had left the country. The societies in general were so grieved on this account, and so influenced the minds of the preachers by their incessant complaints, that in the year 1778, a considerable number of them earnestly importuned Mr. Asbury to take *proper measures*, that the people might enjoy the priviledges of all other churches, and no longer be deprived of the Christian sacraments. *Mr. Asbury's attachment to the church of England* was at that time *exceedingly strong*: he therefore refused them any redress. On this the majority of the preachers withdrew from him, and consequently from Mr. Wesley, and chose out of themselves three senior brethren, who ordained others by the imposition of their hands. The preachers thus set apart, administered the sacraments to those they judged proper to receive them in every place where they came. However, Mr. Asbury by indefatigable labour and attention, and by all the address in his power, brought them back one after another, and by a vote of one of the conferences, the ordination was declared invalid; and a perfect re-union took place."

In the "*Life of Mr. Jarrat*" published by the Rev. Mr. Coleman of the protestant episcopal church of Maryland, we meet with a similar account, and are there told that Mr. Asbury was very active in the suppression of this schism, and to that end circulated and commented upon "*Mr. Wesley's reasons against separating from the church.*"

The account of this transaction as given by Coke and More, appears fair, candid and sufficiently circumstantial to a cursory reader ; but as the subsequent conduct of the Methodist society ended in a complete separation from the church, by the introduction and reception of a new kind of ordination assuming the name of Episcopal, with the same Mr. Asbury as bishop and pontiff in

America at its head; we may be justified, I should suppose, in making a few remarks on the above statement.

In the first place we are told that "the societies were destitute of sacraments, except in two or three of the cities." This is a very strained account indeed, and scarcely reconcilable with truth; for, in the state of Maryland there were never less than eighteen Episcopal clergymen, at any one time, during that period, and in Virginia many more. But in this respect the Methodists had no more reason to complain than the rest of their brethren of the church of England. Indeed, had the Methodist preachers, as members of the church of England, rightly instructed their people, as, no doubt, Mr. Asbury, in consequence of his *exceeding strong attachment to the church of England*, must have taught them; they must have known that it was highly improper for them to desire the sacraments from either Presbyterian, Baptist, or independent ministers; since the church of which they professed themselves members, esteems those ordinances which are celebrated by men not Episcopally ordained, null and void. Besides, if Divine Providence had so ordered their situation, that they could not possibly obtain the sacraments to be administered unto them in a proper and valid manner, they should have bowed in humble acquiescence to the divine will, and been content to wait God's good pleasure: for he is not a hard master, he doth not expect to reap where he hath not sowed, and he will never blame any one for not doing that which he has not given them power to do. In fine, the Methodists should have been taught that the sacraments are only necessary to salvation where they can be had "*according to Christ's institution in all things which of necessity are requisite to the same*," as the 19th article of the church and the 13th article of the Methodists declares. Now a minister regularly ordained is deemed by all Episcopalian churches, one essential requisite.

"Mr. Asbury," then, at the head of the Methodist societies in America, under Mr. Wesley, was applied to, and solicited to "TAKE PROPER MEASURES *that the people might enjoy the privileges of other churches, and no longer be deprived of the Christian sacraments.*" The preachers who made this request, as well as their hearers, were now far gone in the way of Schism. What measures could Mr. Asbury possibly take, which could be called proper? He was a mere layman, and all his preachers were laymen also. No means at that time could be carried into execution for the obtaining ordination from the English bishops. We are hence obliged to suppose that either a separation from the church, and a union with the Presbyterians, Baptists or Independents, or a mere lay-ordination was what was meant by the expression "*proper measures*;" for we find the last was resorted to when Mr. Asbury, in consequence of his *exceeding strong attachment*,

the church of England, refused them any redress ;—though, by the bye, it is hard to conceive what redress Mr. Asbury could have afforded them, or what proper measures he could have taken, even had he not been so *exceedingly attached to the church of England*, at that time. He, however, very properly endeavoured to subdue the schismatical and separating spirit.

But alas ! that spirit respects no boundaries, however sacred ! Disappointed in their hopes of obtaining the countenance of Mr. Asbury, these preachers resolved to proceed to the execution of their plan without his assistance. But not willing to set aside altogether, a form which both Scripture and universal practice had sanctioned and declared necessary, three senior brethren were elected to ordain *others* by the imposition of their hands ; and, no doubt, *these others* returned the compliment to the *three senior brethren*. These new-fangled ministers administered certain rites, which they called sacraments, and usurp'd the fulness of the ministerial office. Thus did the schismatical spirit cause these men to reverse the order of the divine institution, by prompting them to send ministers to Christ of their own making, and not permitting them to wait with patience till Christ, in the ways of his providence, might be pleased to send ministers to them, in his own order, and with his commission.

Mr. Asbury, on this occasion, gave a specimen of his amazing talents in the art of *Ignatian Government*, which afterwards raised him to the supremacy of the society, over which he actually, tho' not professedly, exercises an absolute sway, at this present time. By his address, it seems, he reclaimed the strayed sheep and shepherds from the unjustifiable *step* they had taken ; but, we are sorry indeed to be obliged to say, that he shortly after became their head and leader in taking one, not a whit more justifiable.

“ *By a vote of one of the conferences,*” this lay-“ *ordination was declared invalid.*” With submission, I conceive this conference meddled with what it was not competent to decide ; as it was composed of mere laymen, it possessed no ecclesiastical authority whatever ; but had even all the members thereof been clergymen, the validity or invalidity of an ordination must rest on the authority of the ordainers, and not on the vote of any body of men whatever, whether civil or ecclesiastical. Had the ordination been valid in itself, an unanimous vote against it could not render it invalid, nor, being in itself invalid, an unanimous vote for it, could not render it valid. Let this sentiment be remembered and applied to the subsequent reception of Dr. Coke's letters of Episcopal orders given by Mr. Wesley, and it will be seen what weight ought to be attached to the declaration of the conference in 1784. “ *That they were fully satisfied of the validity of Dr. Coke's and Mr. Asbury's Episcopal Ordination.*” The lay-ordination, however, of the *three senior brethren*, being set aside, we shall let it

rest, fully satisfied that it met with a fate, which, we firmly believe, *all spurious ordinations* will, sooner or later, meet with.

Trif I shall close this chapter with mentioning a circumstance I was told a few years ago, by a person who appeared well acquainted with the progress of Methodism in the United States, and whom I judged entitled to be credited, respecting another kind of ordination which certain Methodist preachers obtained during the war, but which was also treated as a nullity by Mr. Asbury and the conference. The story goes, that Mr. Strawbridge and others applied for, and obtained a Presbyterian ordination from some Dutch Calvinist ministers in the state of Maryland. If this be truth, which indeed I will not vouch for, it will be difficult to divine the cause why this ordination was deemed invalid, and yet that the ordination derived from Mr. Wesley should be so soon afterwards readily acknowledged valid, and Episcopal. It would appear, supposing this a just statement, that Presbyterian ordination was not then esteemed valid by Mr. Asbury, although he made no hesitation about it, when it brought the title and consequence of a supreme bishop with it to be vested in himself. But be this as it will, we fear *the Bishoprick* was what completely destroyed *his exceeding strong attachment to the Church*.

Thus we see that in the first case of the *three senior brethren*, neither the, supposed, holiness of the persons, nor their, professed, divine call to the office of the ministry, was regarded sufficient to justify them in assuming the powers of ordination: and, if the latter account be correct, the pretended divine right of Presbyters to confer ordination, was esteemed a thing of nought: these, however, are the grounds insisted upon, at present, by the adherents to Methodism. Schism cannot be consistent...it is the privilege of truth alone, not to be at variance with itself.

CHAPTER II.

IN Wesley's life written by Coke and More p. 351, we meet with the following statement.

"When peace was established between Great Britain and the States, the intercourse was opened between the societies in both countries. Mr. Wesley then received from Mr. Asbury, a full account of the progress of the work during the war; and especially of the division which had taken place, and

“ the difficulties he met with, before it was healed. He also informed Mr. Wesley of the extreme uneasiness of the people’s mind’s, for want of the sacraments : that thousands of their children were unbaptized ; and the members of the society in general, had not partaken of the Lord’s supper for many years. Mr. Wesley then considered the subject, and informed Dr. Coke of his design of drawing up a plan of church government, and of establishing an ordination, for his American societies. But cautious of entering on so *new a plan*, he afterwards suspended the execution of his purposes, and weighed the whole for upwards of a year.”

Here Dr. Coke tells us that Mr. Wesley informed him of his design of drawing up a plan of church government, and of establishing an ordination for his American societies : but Dr. Coke has not thought it expedient to inform us that he wrote to Mr. Wesley urging him to ordain him bishop, which Dr. Whitehead declares he did, and, in his “ *Life of Wesley*” has published the letter. Dr. Whitehead also, speaking of the Wesleyan ordination, says, “ *that the person who advised the measure, would be proved to have been a felon to Methodism and to have stuck an assassinating knife into the vitals of its body.*” Again—

Dr. Coke says, this plan of Mr. Wesley’s was a *new plan*, which made him cautious of entering upon it : consequently, it was a *plan* which had neither the sanction of Scripture, or the practice of the primitive church to justify his adoption of it.— Well might Mr. Wesley hesitate and weigh the whole for upwards of a year ; it had been still better, if he had taken *eight years longer* to have weigh’d it, and made use of the balances of the sanctuary of God’s church, in place of those of his own *feelings* and *inclinations*, and Dr. Coke’s solicitations ; it had then never been put in execution at all, or if it had, every one would have known its rightful father.

“ At the conference held in Leeds 1784, he (Mr. Wesley) declared his intention of sending Dr. Coke and some other preachers to America. Mr. Richard Whatcoat and Mr. Thomas Vasey offered themselves as missionaries for that purpose and were accepted. Before they sailed Mr. Wesley abridged the common prayer book, and wrote to Dr. Coke then in London, desiring him to meet him in Bristol to receive FULLER POWERS ; and to bring the Rev. Mr. Creighton with him. The Dr. and Mr. Creighton accordingly met him in Bristol, when with their assistance he ordained Mr. Richard Whatcoat, and Mr. Thomas Vasey *presbyters* for America : and did afterwards ordain Dr. Coke a *superintendent*, giving him letters of ordination under his hand and seal, and at the same time a letter to be printed and circulated in America.”

It hence appearst nat at the time of holding the Leeds conference, Mr. Wesley had made up his mind respecting the *new plan of church government and ordination* he had devised for America. This conference was held July 27th, 1784—Dr. Samuel Seabury had then been some time in England, for the avowed purpose of obtaining episcopal consecration from the English bishops—*let this be kept in mind*—and in the month of October following we find Dr. Coke and his companions on their passage to America—see *Coke's Journal*.

• From the account which Dr. Coke hath given us, it doth not appear that this *new plan* was communicated by Mr. Wesley to the conference, nay, *Myles in his chronological history of the Methodists*, p. 162, informs us, that the account of its having been carried into execution was not given to that body till 1786 : consequently Mr. Wesley neither submitted his plan to the body of his preachers, nor ever obtained their sanction to it. Was it not then an act of schism, not only as it regarded the church of England, but as it regarded the Methodist society in Europe ? The other biographers of Mr. Wesley, viz. Dr. Whitehead and Mr. Hampson, lead us to this conclusion, and to believe that the whole of this *new plan* was the contrivance of a few individuals, who took advantage of Mr. Wesley's age and infirmities, and who were to be invested with powers, which would enable them to appear to much advantage as fabricators of a new church in the new world. However, the whole passing as Mr. Wesley's doings, we shall consider him as the father contriver, and founder of this new fangled, *episcopal church*, so called.

As Mr. Wesley was *primum mobile* to all appearance, in this business, and was to be as Myles speaks, the fountain of honor and authority in this *new religion* ; and, since by altering and abridging the liturgy of the church of England, curtailing some of her articles, and entirely rejecting others, he assumed and exercised powers which hitherto had been presumed to have been invested in no less a body, than the council of a national church constituted upon an apostolic foundation : a question arises, viz. by what authority he did these things ?

That he did not possess such an authority in virtue of his ordination as a presbyter of the Church of England, is manifest ; for by that ordination he became bound to exercise his ministry as a presbyter of the church, as that church and realm had appointed : and, it is well known that the Church of England never conferred power on the presbyters to alter her Liturgy, curtail her articles, or to ordain to any order of the ministry : nay, if words have any meaning ; if solemn vows ratified and confirmed by the reception of the holy sacrament have any force ; they are expressly prohibited from assuming any such powers. Hence it is evident Mr. Wesley did not derive the powers he assumed and

exercised, from his ordination as a presbyter of the Church of England. He, however, did assume such powers in violation of the most solemn vows he entered into when he was ordained deacon and presbyter by Dr. Potter bishop of Oxford, afterwards translated from that see, to the Archiepiscopal see of Canterbury.

I have, however, frequently heard his superior holiness advanced as a plea in his justification. Strange! That superior holiness should serve as a dispensation from the performance of the most sacred obligations! But that Mr. Wesley possessed so superior a degree of holiness, is far from being certain: and whoever will take the trouble to read the *Sermons of Geo. Fred. Nott on Religious Enthusiasm*, will be inclined to think that more holiness has been attributed to him than what he possessed.

Many of his followers, and among them we find the name of Phæbus of New-York, have claimed for him an extraordinary mission, as a *new apostle*, and in proof thereof, have produced the accounts of the great and wonderful success, which attended his labours; but if this is a sufficient evidence of his apostleship, and extraordinary mission, I see not how we can refuse to acknowledge Mahomet, Montanus, Arius, and many others, as prophets and apostles sent from God.

Dr. Coke, as above quoted, further informs us, that Mr. Wesley wrote to him to meet him at Bristol to receive FULLER POWERS, and to bring the Rev. Mr. Crughton with him.

I would here ask the advocates of Mr. Wesley, what powers he possessed, which Dr. Coke did not also possess? For Dr. Coke was equal to Mr. Wesley in the ministry of Christ's church. If Mr. Wesley did possess *fuller powers* than the rest of his brother presbyters of the Church of England, it is highly necessary we should be made acquainted from whence he obtained them. This is a subject I should wish to have fully cleared up; but it is a subject which I fear will forever fix on Mr. Wesley the guilt or folly of usurping powers, which every human and divine obligation forbade him to meddle with.

Ordination vows, and sacramental obligations on that occasion, were blotted from the remembrance of Mr. Wesley, Dr. Coke and Mr. Creighton, or, at least they determined no longer to allow themselves to be shackled by them. Their *superior holiness* disdained all such restraints. For, in a private chamber, as Dr. Whitehead asserts, and Myles indirectly acknowledges, in the city of Bristol, these three presbyters of the Church of England, renounced the Episcopacy of that church, and, becoming, for the time and occasion, Presbyterians, they formed themselves into the Presbytery, and ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey Presbyters for America. But the *new plan* being designed to bear the name of Episcopal, they quickly forsook their Presbyterianism,

and became a species of Episcopalians of their own invention, and having recognized the Rev. John Wesley as their bishop, though never consecrated to that work and office, they present unto him the Rev. Dr. Coke to be made by him a bishop on a *new plan*. He receives him, and, as presiding and consecrating bishop, assisted by Mr. Presbyter Creighton, and, no doubt, by Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey also, soon made him a *newly contrived sort of bishop*. Thus the two gentlemen, viz. Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey, had very soon an opportunity of returning the favour they had received from Dr. Coke, in contributing to make him bishop, upon a *new plan*, as he just before had contributed his assistance to make them presbyters, upon a *new plan*.

These three gentlemen, viz. Dr. Coke, and Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey, are in the fourth section of the Methodist book of discipline, called, "*Regularly ordained clergy*" !!!

Now can either Episcopalians or Presbyterians, consistently with their established principles, acknowledge such ordinations to be either valid or regular? I should presume not.

It may here be proper to observe that Mr. Wesley modestly substituted the words *superintendent* for *bishop*, but Messrs. Coke and Asbury thought proper to assume the latter, and now pass themselves off, in the *United States*, as truly and regularly consecrated Bishops!

Had the gentlemen concerned in this first ordination paid any regard to the laws of their country, or the canons of their church, they would have known, that had they even possessed the powers of ordination, they were encroaching on the right of the bishop of Bristol, and performing an act which no bishop could regularly and canonically perform without his permission within the limits of his diocese.

We shall now make a few remarks on the letters of ordination said to have been given by Mr. Wesley to Dr. Coke.

Several years before this time Dr. Coke had received letters of ordination, both as deacon and presbyter or priest from the bishop who ordained him to those orders respectively. Hence we may conclude that the letters sign'd and seal'd by Mr. Wesley, were neither for the order of deacon nor presbyter, but for an order superior to these, since by the ordination performed by Mr. Wesley, he is supposed to have had *fuller powers* conferred upon him, than what he before possessed. This superior order was called *superintendent*: consequently, in this *new plan*, superintendent or

bishop was not considered the same as presbyter, but as an order distinct from and superior to the order of presbyter, and, we are further justified in deducing this consequence, because the Methodists in America, call themselves, not presbyterial, but episcopal Methodists; they have declared the episcopal form of government to be the *most excellent*,* and have adopted *three distinct offices* of ordination for *three distinct orders of ministers*, viz. bishops or superintendants, elders or presbyters, and deacons. In each of these offices, the following words, or those for the same import are to be found. Thus in the office of deacons, "O God, who hast appointed *divers orders* in thy church, &c." and then the order of deacon is specified as one of those *divers orders*, by praying "that God would give his grace to this his servant now called to the office of deacon." In the office for presbyters or elders, the same passages are found, only the word "*presbyter*" or "*elder*" stands in the place of the word "*deacon*," to denote that elder or presbyter is another of those *divers orders*. And in the office for bishops or superintendants, we find the same sentiments still advanced, the word "*bishop*" or "*superintendent*" being put in the place of the word "*elder*" or "*deacon*" to declare that bishops or superintendants are likewise a third order which God hath established in his church. With such documents staring them in the face, it is astonishing that any Methodist should now be contending for the validity of presbyterian ordination in order to serve as a prop to support their *new planned* episcopacy: or that they should be endeavouring to prove episcopacy only a human institution, and, that the presbyterian was the apostolic mode of conferring the ministerial authority!

Shortly after this Weslian ordination in the private chamber, Dr. Coke, the bishop upon a *new plan*, and Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey, presbyters and assistant bishop-makers upon a new plan, set sail for America with their stock in trade, viz. the abridged liturgy, Mr. Wesley's circular letter to the American Methodists, Dr. Coke's credentials with Wesley's signature and seal, and Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey's letters of ordination. In America we shall meet with them before long, carrying the *new plan* into more extensive operation than they had room to do in the city of Bristol.

The following letter will shew what were the sentiments of Mr Charles Wesley respecting this ordination upon a *new plan*.

* If the episcopal form of government be the *most excellent*, we may safely conclude it to be apostolic and divine: since we cannot suppose the apostles did not establish a church government, neither can we suppose they omitted to establish that which was *most excellent*. If presbytery was the apostolic mode, as some Methodists now assert, how dare they presume to say with their church, that the episcopalian mode is the *most excellent*.

*Copy of a letter from the Rev. Charles Wesley to the Rev. Dr.
CHANDLER, just before the Doctor's embarkation for America.*

LONDON, APRIL 28th, 1785.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

AS you are setting out for America, and I for a more distant country, I think it needful to leave with you some account of myself, and my companions through life. At eight years old, in 1715, I was sent by my father, rector of Epworth, to Westminster school, and placed under the care of my elder brother Samuel, a strict Churchman, who brought me up in his own principles. In 1727 I was elected student of Christ Church. My brother John was then fellow of Lincoln.

The first year at college I lost in diversions. The next I betook myself to study. Diligence led me into serious thinking. I went to the weekly sacrament, and persuaded two or three young scholars to accompany me; and likewise, to observe the *method* of study prescribed by the statutes of the university. This gained me the harmless nickname of *Methodist*. In half a year my brother left his curacy of Epworth, and came to our assistance. We then proceeded regularly in our studies, and in doing what good we could to the bodies and souls of men.

I took my degrees, and only thought of spending all my days at Oxford; but my brother who always had the ascendant over me, persuaded me to accompany him and Mr. Oglethorpe, to Georgia. I dreaded exceedingly entering into holy orders; but he over-ruled me here also; and I was ordained deacon by the bishop of Oxford, on Sunday, and the next, priest by the bishop of London.

Our only design was to do all the good we could, as ministers of the church of England, to which we were firmly attached both by education and principle. My brother still acknowledged her the best national church in the world.

In 1736 we arrived as missionaries in Georgia. My brother took charge of Savannah, and I of Frederica; waiting for an opportunity of preaching to the Indians. I was, in the mean time, secretary to Mr. Oglethorpe, and also secretary of Indian affairs.

The hardships of lying upon the ground, &c. soon threw me into a fever and dysentery, which forced me in half a year to return to England. My brother returned the next year. Still we had no plan but to serve God and the church of England. The lost sheep of this fold were our principal care: not excluding any Christians of whatever denomination, who were willing to add the power of godliness to their own particular form.

Our elder brother Samuel was alarmed at our going on, and strongly expressed his fears of its ending in a separation from the church. All our enemies prophesied the same. This confirmed us the more in our resolution to continue in our calling : which we constantly avowed both in public and private, by word and preaching, and writing ; exhorting all our hearers to follow our example.

My brother drew up rules for our society, one of which was, constantly to attend the church prayers and sacrament. When we were no longer permitted to preach in the churches, we preached (but never in church hours) in houses, or fields, and sent from thence, or rather carried, multitudes to church, who had never been there before. Our society, in most places, made the bulk of the congregation both at prayers and sacrament.

I never lost my dread of a separation, or ceased to guard our society against it. I frequently told them, "I am your servant as long as you remain members of the church of England, but no longer. Should you ever forsake her you renounce me." Some of our lay-preachers very early discovered an inclination to separate, which induced my brother to publish *reasons against a separation*. As often as it appeared, we beat down the schismatical spirit. If any one did leave the church, at the same time he left our society. For fifty years we kept the sheep in the fold, and having fulfilled the number of our days, only waited to depart in peace.

After our having continued friends for above seventy years, and fellow-labourers for above fifty, can any thing but death part us ? I can scarcely yet believe, that in his eighty-second year, my brother, my old intimate friend and companion, should have assumed the episcopal character, ordained elders, consecrated a bishop, and sent him to ordain the lay-preachers in America. I was then in Bristol at his elbow ; yet he never gave me the least hint of his intention. How was he surprised into so rash an action ? He certainly persuaded himself that it was right.

Lord Mansfield told me last year, that *ordination was separation*. This my brother does not, and will not see ; or that he has renounced the principles and practices of his whole life ; that he has acted contrary to all his declarations, protestations and writings ; robbed his friends of their boasting ; realized the nag's head ordination ; and left an indelible blot on his name, as long as it shall be remembered.

Thus our partnership here is dissolved ; but not our friendship. I have taken him for better for worse till death us do part, or rather reunite us in love inseparable. I have lived on earth a little too long, who have to see this evil day ; but I shall very soon be taken from it, in steadfast faith that the Lord will main-

My Sheep's sinners

And

tain his own cause and carry on his work, and fulfil his promise to his church; "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

Permit me to subscribe myself,

Reverend and dear Sir,

Your faithful and obedient servant and brother.

CHARLES WESLEY.

P. S. What will become of these poor sheep in the wilderness, the American Methodists? How have they been betrayed into a separation from the church of England, which their preachers and they no more intended than the Methodists here? Had they had patience a little longer, they would have seen a *real primitive bishop* in America, *duly consecrated by three Scotch bishops* who had their consecration from the English bishops, and are acknowledged by them as the same with themselves. There is therefore not the least difference between the members of bishop Seabury's church, and the members of the church of England.

You know I had the happiness to converse with that truly apostolic man, who is esteemed by all that know him, as much as by you and me. He told me he looked upon the Methodists in America as sound members of the church, and was ready to ordain any of their preachers, whom he should find duly qualified. His ordination would be indeed genuine, valid and episcopal. But what are your poor Methodists now? only a new sect of Presbyterians. And after my brother's death, which is now so very near, what will be their end? They will lose all their influence and importance; they will turn aside to vain janglings; they will settle again upon their lees, and, like other sects of dissenters, come to nothing.

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CHAPTER III.

WHILE on his passage to America, Dr. Coke employed a part of his time in reading the writings of bishop Hoadley, who is supposed by some to have entertained and advocated opinions favorable to the *new plan*.

The Doctor in his Journal, published in the American Arminian Magazine, Vol. 1st p. 240 and 241, writes thus.—

The best of all is, God is with us.

"Monday 18th October, 1784—I have now waded through bishop Hoadley's treatises on conformity and episcopacy, 560 pages octavo. He is a powerful reasoner, but is, I doubt, wrong in his premises. However he is very candid. In one place, he allows the truth of St. Jerome's account of the presbyters of Alexandria, who, as Jerome says, elected their own bishops for 200 years, from the time of St. Mark to the time of Dionysius. In another, he makes this grand concession, 'I think not an uninterrupted line of succession of regularly ordained bishops necessary, p. 489.' In several places he grants that there may be cases which may justify a Presbyterian ordination. But he *really seems to prove one thing*. That it has been the *universal practice* of the church, from the *latter end of the lives* of the apostles to invest the power of ordination in a CHURCH OFFICER SUPERIOR TO THE PRESBYTERS, whom the church soon after the *death of the apostles*, called BISHOP, but who had no *distinct name* given him in the *new Testament*."

From all this, I cannot conceive that the very shadow of an argument can be obtained in favor of Mr. Wesley's assumption of the power of ordaining bishops, elders and deacons; on the contrary, Dr. Coke, in the latter part of this passage, has published both Mr. Wesley's and his own condemnation, as usurpers of powers, which did in no wise belong to them. How Dr. Coke, with such sentiments as he seems to have entertained at the time of writing and publishing his Journal, could proceed to exercise episcopal powers, with such a consecration as he had received, is hard to be accounted for, without attributing to him motives which are inconsistent with common honesty, much less, sincere Christianity. Let us, however, examine this extract from the Doctor's Journal, a little more particularly.

He tells us, that bishop Hoadley, "In one place, allows the truth of St. Jerome's account of the presbyters of Alexandria, who, as Jerome says, elected their own bishops for 200 years." The passage from St. Jerome which bishop Hoadley alludes to is as follows; and I am ready to appeal to any scholar, for the correctness of the translation.

"*At Alexandria from the time of Mark the Evangelist, down to Heraclas and Dionysius, the presbyters chose one of themselves, whom they placed in a higher station, and called him bishop, much in the same manner that an army chooses an Emperor, or deacons an Arch-Deacon.*"

What service this passage is to render the cause of Methodist episcopacy, is beyond my conjecture. Election, is not consecration—election to an office, and receiving a commission to exercise the powers attached to that office, are two distinct things. Though I grant that St. Jerome says, the presbyters elected one of themselves, whom after his election they called bishop, he no

none

where says, that they consecrated or ordained him, nay, in the very next line, he says, they could not. "For," he proceeds, "what does a bishop, which a presbyter cannot do, EXCEPT ORDINATION"? The sense of this passage of St. Jerome appears to be as follows. That on every vacancy of the episcopal chair of Alexandria, the right of election lay in the body of the presbyters of that church, who chose one of themselves to succeed to the episcopate: and that immediately after his election and prior to his consecration he was called bishop, he presided in their assemblies, and performed such other duties, as a presbyter was competent to perform: but that this man was consecrated by the presbyters, or that he ordained others, prior to his consecration by the neighboring bishops, is out of the question, since St. Jerome himself, who is the only author to be produced in proof of this circumstance respecting the church of Alexandria, expressly declares, that the power of ordination belonged not to presbyters. "*Quid enim facit episcopus, quod presbyter non faciat, EXCEPTA ORDINATIONE*"?

There is an article of the constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland similar to that supposed custom of the church of Alexandria, at the time spoken of by St. Jerome. The seventh article of the constitution of the P. E. Church in Maryland is expressed in the following words.

"In case of a vacancy in the episcopal office, the convention immediately upon their assembling, shall choose, by joint ballot, a president from among the order of priests, who shall remain in office until the next election of president. He shall perform all the duties, and possess all the privileges above specified, but he shall not call special meetings of the convention, unless applied to for that purpose by a majority of the standing committee. And if, while there is a bishop in this church he shall not be present at any meeting of the convention, they shall elect, in the manner aforesaid, a president *pro tempore*."

But it is well known that the priest thus elected is neither consecrated himself, nor does he pretend to ordain others.

The future historian of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, will relate with truth, that from the time that she were first planted in this country, till after the revolution, there were no bishops. Yet, if a few centuries hence, it should be concluded, that the presbyters undertook to ordain, in consequence of this peculiar situation, the conclusion would be very false.

What follows in Dr. Coke's Journal, is a quotation from bishop Hoadley, which he thinks, contains a grand concession: he tells us that the bishop says, "I think not an uninterrupted line of regularly ordained bishops necessary."

This is a concession, which in the sense Dr. Coke affixes to it, was never yet, and, I am bold to say, never will be made by any

true episcopalian church, notwithstanding bishop Hoadley's opinion. But it is a concession which all episcopalians I should imagine would readily make, in another sense, and yet the cause of Methodist episcopacy could gain nothing by it.

For instance, had Rome, Alexandria, Corinth, Philippi, or any other see, been without a bishop for 500 years together, the uninterrupted line of succession would certainly be broken and interrupted in such see, during that time; but the very instant that a bishop was consecrated by any true bishop in any part of the world for that see, the uninterrupted line of succession of bishops from the apostles, would be restored to it. And on the other hand, had there been in each of the above cities, fifty or more truly consecrated bishops contending for the possession of those sees, each of them was competent to transmit the succession. For it is an uninterrupted line of succession in the order of bishops, and not an uninterrupted line of bishops in peaceable possession of any see, particularly that episcopalians contend for. And this succession cannot be lost, so long as there remains one true bishop, in any see whatever, to preserve it.

It is indeed a sufficient guard upon such succession, and a proof that it never has been lost, "That from the time of the apostles, it has been the universal practice of the church down to the present day, to receive none as bishops, who were not known by the most convincing proofs to have been consecrated by other bishops. The consecration of bishops was always a public solemn act, of which there were many witnesses." *It was not performed clandestinely in private chambers.* "And in disputed cases it was always easy to discover whether a person claiming to be a bishop, had received a proper commission. It is in the highest degree absurd to suppose," with such precautions as were always used, "that any person could have ever been permitted to succeed to the episcopal office, who was not duly commissioned." See *Companion to Festivals and Fasts*. p. 33.

Those persons, therefore, who say, that the succession from the apostles in the order of bishops, is lost, in any church, which professes the necessity and possession of it, are bound to shew, in order to make good their assertion, that the person who began the present dynasty of bishops, in that church, was never truly and validly consecrated to his work and office, by other truly and validly consecrated bishops. Till this is done, the claim of such church to an apostolic succession in the order of bishops, must remain in full force.

Now in respect to Methodist ordinations, this can be very easily done. Mr. Asbury received his episcopal powers from the hands of Dr. Coke. Dr. Coke received his from the hands of Mr. Wesley. And Mr. Wesley received his from—Mr. Nobody.

Indeed it is well known that Mr. Wesley was only a presbyter, and never was consecrated to the work and office of a bishop, by any Bishop whatever, *either true or false.*

"In several places," continues Dr. Coke, "he," bishop Hoadley, "grants, that there may be cases, which may justify a Presbyterian ordination."

Although I am far from concurring in opinion with the bishop, because I chuse rather to depend on the long and universally established principles of all true episcopal churches, than on the sentiments of one, who, even Dr. Coke "*doubts, is wrong in his premises:*" yet, for a moment, I will suppose his opinion correct, in order to shew that Methodist episcopacy can receive no advantage from it.

If the situation of religion in America was such as would justify a Presbyterian ordination, there were a sufficient number of presbyters of that kind of ordination already there. If it be said, that there were no presbyters among the Methodists, why did not Mr. Wesley content himself with the establishing a Presbyterian ordination among them? But no—it was an episcopal ordination he meant to establish: for Dr. Coke was a presbyter before Mr. Wesley undertook to ordain him: besides, Mr. Wesley did not pretend to ordain him a presbyter, but an officer who by that ordination would receive *fuller powers* than a presbyter was competent to exercise without it. Add to this, that it was not a Presbyterian church which Dr. Coke was sent into America to organize, but one which was to bear the name, and adopt the form of episcopal, as being the *most excellent form of church government.* The Methodists, therefore, have forfeited all claim to the use of Presbyterian arguments, whatever weight there might be in them, for they profess to be Episcopalians, not Presbyterians. In fine, their church is founded on a *new plan*, devised by *somebody or other*, but sanctioned by Mr. Wesley; to which for reasons, which, we presume, might easily be given, he has been pleased to affix the name "Episcopal."

While on the subject of Presbyterian arguments, and the right of the Methodists to avail themselves of them, I will give an extract from the late Rev. Dr. Berkeley. It is published as a note on the 35th page of his Sermon, called *An Enquiry into the Origin of Episcopacy.* The Methodists would do well to consider it attentively, particularly those among them, who endeavor to support their episcopacy by arguments borrowed from Presbyterian writers.

"Should it be granted in defiance of all antiquity, and, as I think, in contradiction to the clearest evidence of scripture; that in the church, there were at first *but two* permanent orders of ministers, of which the higher were called bishops or presbyters *indifferently*, and the other deacons; I see no advantage, which

“from such a concession could redound to the Presbyterian cause,” *Or, the Methodist cause.* “According to this supposition, the apostolical presbyters must have been invested, as it is contended” *by the Presbyterians and many Methodists that* “they were, with all the powers of modern bishops : with the power of preaching, of administering the sacraments, and of sending labourers into Christ’s vineyard : but it is notorious that, at the reformation, and in every prior period of the Church, of which history makes mention, there were three orders in the ministry, of which the second was authorized to preach the gospel, and to administer the sacraments, but not to send labourers into Christ’s vineyard, which was the prerogative of the highest alone. That second order, being, therefore, upon this supposition, unknown to the Church in the apostolic age, must have been” instituted and “introduced into the church, by” *mere human*, which is far from being “competent authority. And yet it is from this order,” of mere human institution, according to the Presbyterian hypothesis ; “that the Presbyterians” and Methodists “derive their mission, which therefore upon their own principles **MUST BE TOTALLY VOID,**” as resting solely upon a mere human institution.

I shall now conclude this chapter with remarking, that when a man writes and publishes a Journal we expect him to write his real and undisguised sentiments : therefore we may safely conclude that bishop Hoadly *really convinced* Dr. Coke of *one thing*, viz. “That it has been the universal practice of the Church from the latter end of the lives of the apostles, to invest the power of ordination in a church officer superior to the presbyters, whom the Church soon after the death of the apostles called bishop, but who had no distinct name given him in the New Testament.” Now Dr. Coke knew that neither himself, Mr. Wesley, Mr. Creighton, Mr. Whatcoat, or Mr. Vasey, were in possession of such an office ; and yet he scrupled not to exercise its functions. The laws of Christian charity allow me not to decide what were his motives, for thus acting contrary to what, he has himself given us room to believe, were his real convictions : and, I am sorry to be obliged to entertain an opinion respecting them, unfavorable to his reputation as a man of strict integrity and sincerity.

CHAPTER IV.

BY Dr. Coke's Journal of the date of November 3d, 1784, we learn that he had then safely arrived at New-York. Here he met with Mr. Dickins a travelling preacher, who at that time was stationed there. To him he quickly opened Mr. Wesley's *new plan*; Mr. Dickins earnestly pressed him to make it public, "because," says Dr. Coke, "as he," Mr. Dickins, "most justly argues, Mr. Wesley has *determined* the point, though Mr. Asbury is most respectfully to be consulted in respect to every part of the execution of it. By some means or other, *the whole continent, as it were, expects me. Mr. Asbury himself has for some time expected me.*"

"*Mr. Wesley has determined the point.*" The determination of Mr. Wesley was to silence all opposition. The American conference was to enjoy but the mere shadow of authority. To the will of the father and sovereign of Methodism, conferences, societies, preachers and people must yield implicit obedience. The conference like the ancient parliaments of France, was only to be used as a court to register the decrees of the Methodist pontiff. Mr. Asbury, indeed, was to be consulted and to be permitted to give his advice respecting the best mode of carrying the *new plan* into execution, but no liberty was allowed even unto him, of opposing the plan itself. That point Mr. Wesley had fully and firmly determined.

Dr. Coke seems fully to have felt his own importance, and to have been not a little elated with the consideration of the exalted station he held as deputy apostle from the Prince of Methodism resident in Bristol. So great and remarkable *an event*, as the arrival of *so eminent* a personage in the western world, must undoubtedly have caused *wonderful emotion* in the minds of all men; and the Doctor is not willing that posterity should be deprived of a record respecting *so very interesting* a circumstance: for, says he, "the whole continent, as it were, expects me; Mr. Asbury himself has for some time expected me." Surely he imagined that some supernatural power had been operating on the minds of the people at large, and performing the office of a forerunner, to prepare them for his arrival.

On Sunday, November 14th, 1784, as the Journal tells us, the deputy and Mr. Asbury met for the first time. "After sermon,

"says the Doctor, "a plain robust man came up to me in the pulpit, and kissed me. I thought it could be no other than Mr. Asbury, and I was not mistaken." Loving meeting! had camp meeting been then in fashion, we should not have been surprised, had a hug accompanied the kiss.

After dinner on the same day, the deputy privately opened the plan to Mr. Asbury. *He expressed considerable doubts about it.* We are not, however, told the nature of those doubts: possibly, *his exceeding strong attachment to the Church*, was not quite broken. But if it was not then, means were soon found to destroy it. We are also left in the dark, whether, when the plan was opened to Mr. Asbury, he was inform'd of Mr. Wesley's determination or not. We should, however, suppose not, since notwithstanding Mr. Wesley's determination, an appearance of choice, of deliberation, of a power of accepting or rejecting was still kept up. A council of preachers immediately entered into conclave, in which it was resolved, that a conference of all the preachers on the continent should be called. Mr. Freeborn Garretson was sent off to convey the resolution of the council to them, and to gather them all together at Baltimore on the approaching Christmas-eve.

That even the deputy himself, had *some doubts* respecting the *new plan*, may be presumed from a prayer he made, when crossing a broad ferry on Monday December 6th, 1784. "We were in considerable danger," says he, "and, if my heart did not deceive me, I *calmly and sincerely* prayed that God would drown me, and take me to himself, if the *peculiar work* in which I am engaged was not for his glory." What tempting of God! doth not such a prayer imply doubt and uncertainty respecting the rectitude of *that work*? I leave it to the reader to return an answer.

Before I proceed to give an account of the proceedings of the conference, it will be proper to notice the political conduct of Mr. Wesley during the revolutionary war, as far as that conduct regarded the affairs of his societies.

That Mr. Wesley thought himself at liberty to avail himself of means to promote the interests of his society which many will think unjustifiable, the two following instances will serve to prove. At the thirty-eighth Methodistical conference, it was proposed: "ought we not to exhort all *dying persons* to be then at least *merciful* after their power?" and it was determined; "We ought without any regard to the reflections that will be cast upon us on that account." See *Myles*, p. 139. At the thirty-sixth conference, it was determined, that a general decrease of the societies was owing, "partly to a want of trying new places; partly to prejudice against the King, *speaking evil of dignities*, &c." And, to remedy this evil, it was ordered; "that none

"should be suffered to preach with them, who spoke evil of those in authority, or prophesied evil to the nation." See *Myles*, p. 138. This was in the year 1779. It must be observed, that Mr. Wesley, at the beginning of the dispute, was so zealous an opposer of the British government in the measures they took against America, that he preached against them: suddenly however *his opinions changed*; and to the astonishment of all his friends, he not only wrote against the Americans, but in private, on every possible occasion, and in public from the pulpit, he was heard constantly and violently to defend the conduct of the administration. In consequence of this change in Mr. Wesley's political sentiments, the Americans were called rebels; and all the acts of the American Methodists, and their very names, were expunged from the minutes of the general society. See *Hampson's Life of Wesley*, Vol. 3, p. 134, *et passim* in Vol. 2.

Some of Mr. Wesley's strictures upon a sermon preached, some considerable time before the declaration of Independence, by Dr. Smith in Philadelphia, are as follows:

"A sermon preached by Dr. Smith in Philadelphia, has lately been re-printed here. It has been much admired, but proceeds all along upon wrong suppositions.——"

"Dr. Smith supposes they (the Americans) have a right of granting their own money: that is, of being exempt from taxation by the supreme power."

"But," Mr. Wesley adds, "if they contend for this right, they contend for neither more nor less than Independency."—

"That you contend for the cause of liberty is another mistaken supposition. You have no liberty civil or religious, but what the congress allows. Vainly do you complain of unconstitutional exactions, violated rights, and mutilated charters."

He expresses great astonishment at Dr. Smith for saying, "*No power on earth has a right to grant our money, without our consent.*" And endeavours to refute him thus, "Then you have no sovereign; for every *sovereign under heaven* has a right to tax their subjects; that is, *to grant their property, WITH OR WITHOUT THEIR CONSENT.*"

This political publication of Mr. Wesley was entitled "*a calm address, &c.*" It quickly caught the eye of the celebrated Junius, who thus addressed the Rev'd Politician:

"I have read your address to the Americans with much surprise and concern. That a man, after a long life devoted to the awful concerns of religion, and of a rigidity of morals, strikingly contrasted to the times, should in his old age step forth a champion in a political controversy, is a paradox only to be solved by a reflection on the general motives of such compositions. They exhibit a proof, Mr. Wesley, that the most perfect

"men have hopes on earth, as well as in heaven; and indeed you have the modesty not to forbid us to believe so."

"When you deliver your opinion, you say, you may be the better believed because unbiassed; and then express yourself in this unguarded language. I gain nothing by the Americans, nor by the government, and PROBABLY never shall. This is not only an invitation to the Minister to reward your *pious* labours, but a thorn in his foot if he overlooks them. Had you said, and POSITIVELY *never will*, I should then, as I always have, believed you to be an honest and pious man."

"And now, Mr. Wesley, I take my leave of you. You have forgot the precept of your master, that God and Mammon cannot be served together. You have one eye upon a pension and the other upon heaven—one hand stretched out to the king, the other raised up to God. I pray that the first may reward you and the last forgive you." See *Gent. Mag.* for 1775, p. 561.

Although it is possible the author of the letter to Mr. Wesley, just quoted, was mistaken in regard to the particular motive he seems to have assign'd for Mr. Wesley's political conduct, yet whoever will compare his strictures, his "*calm address*," and versatility in politics during the American war, with his circular letter to the Methodists of the United States, sent by Dr. Coke; will be led to conclude that other motives besides the advancement of the gospel, contributed to render him so active and industrious through life. Indeed his conduct in all the foregoing instances, seems to have been the effect of policy rather than conviction; for when peace was concluded, he wrote to the Americans, and in the language of congratulation, for being freed from the state and hierarchy of England, exhorted them, to stand fast in that liberty with which God had so strangely made them free. See *Hampson*, Vol. 2, p. 174.

On Christmas-eve the conference assembled according to appointment at Baltimore, and continued their sittings for ten days: during which time several circumstances took place, which we now proceed to notice.

A sermon was preached by Dr. Coke, which *Hampson* says in his "*Life of Wesley*, Vol. 2, p. 191, was supposed to be the production of Mr. Wesley's pen: in which are these words. "Though we admire the liturgy of the Church of England, and are determined to retain it with a few alterations; we cannot, we will not hold communion with them, till the holy spirit of God has made them see the evil of the practices and the importance of the doctrines above mentioned. And as for this schism, if it must have the name, we are cheerfully ready to answer for it at the bar of God."

In this conference the liturgy was approved and ordered to be read by those who exercised the ministerial office among them

on Sundays. And Dr. Coke mentions an instance when the reading of it by himself, became a means of procuring for one of his spiritual sisters, one of the greatest manifestations of God's love she had ever experienced. See *Coke's Journal Arm. Mag.* p. 294, Vol. 1.

The determination concerning the liturgy was not long adhered to; the admiration of it soon ceased. It had answer'd the purpose for which it was introduced; and the object of Methodist veneration quickly became an object for Methodist ridicule to shoot at. It ceased to be instrumental in making converts from among true Episcopalians, therefore, it was judged expedient to cast aside such a *dull, dead, lifeless form*, as they then began to call it, and adopt the Presbyterian mode of public worship, in hopes, no doubt, that this accommodation might prove as prolific in converting the Presbyterians, as the liturgy and Episcopalian form of Church Government had been in regard to the Episcopalians.

"We cannot, we will not hold communion with them."—says Dr. Coke.

And yet this same Dr. Coke did in the year 1791 write a penitential letter to bishop White, which will appear in the Appendix, proposing a reunion with the Church, and on such terms as went to invalidate all the episcopal powers of Mr. Wesley, himself, and Mr. Asbury. This scheme, however, not succeeding, he soon returned to the fullness of Methodistic principle, as appears in his "*Notes upon Methodism.*"

In the same sermon we also find the following passages.

"Blessed be God, and praised be his holy name." Let it be remembered that Mr. Wesley is supposed to be the real author of that sermon. See *Hamp. Vol. 2.* "Blessed be God and praised be his holy name, that the memorable revolution (in America) has struck off these intolerable fetters, and broken the antichristian union which before subsisted between the Church and State. And had there been no other advantage arising from that glorious epoch, this itself, I believe, would have made ample compensation for all the calamities of the war. One happy consequence of which, was the expulsion of most of those hirelings (the clergy of the Church of England) of which the society of the Methodists have till lately *professed themselves* a part."

How different a gospel is this, from that which both Dr. Coke and Mr. Wesley preached before and after this time in England! surely on this occasion Dr. Coke, or Mr. Wesley, or both, forgot the promise made by God unto the Church "that kings should become her nursing Fathers, & queens her nursing Mothers." And, certainly some connections is needful in such a case. I presume not even to suggest how far such a connection should

extend: and I really believe it has been form'd frequently for other purposes than the advancement of religion. But while the advancement of purity of manners and Christian orders and discipline is the object kept in perpetual view, I cannot consent to declare that thing a curse, which God promised as a blessing and manifestation of his favor, however consentaneous such an opinion might be to the notions of the populace. Where a true and orderly religion is discountenanced or oppressed, a false and disorderly one will arise, and by its machinations and delusions seduce the multitude into such errors as will make the destruction of all religion a thing easy to be accomplished: and when religion is gone, good government will quickly follow.

As to the "*expulsion of those hirelings*"—at which Dr. Coke so highly exulted, that we may suppose he would rejoice to see the revolutionary horrors of France, repeated in England in order to bring about the same event in his own native country: I shall only remark: that if every institution must be destroyed because it has been abused; the whole body of institutions, human and divine must be abolished, the world must put on an entire new face and undergo a thorough and complete revolution, in which Methodism itself will be found undeserving of preservation. Should ever, which God forbid! the bloody scenes of Munster in the 16th century, or those of St. D—— the latter end of the last and beginning of this, be acted over again in the United States, it may happen that the expulsion of Methodism may prove a "*consummation devoutly to be wished*." For, if we are not very much misinformed, the harangues of *certain Methodist preachers, in certain places*, which might be named, are extremely well calculated to produce such horrors.

"—— Church of England, and of which the Methodists have till lately *professed themselves a part*."

But now it appears they are no longer even to *profess themselves a part*. The time is come in which the mask can be safely torn off and thrown away. This expression of the Doctor's was rather an unfortunate one. It shews that their professions were *mere profession*, "a form without the power." The determination of Mr. Wesley scatters them away, and causes them to disappear for ever. We may here fairly apply to the Methodists what St. John said of the schismatics and separatists of his time: "They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

Since the expression "*till lately professed themselves a part*," was to be made use of, it was well in Dr. Coke to let the Methodists know that their separation from the Church would most probably be called "*a schism*:" for he now acknowledges it to be

from foot of heaven

so, and will be thus understood by all who know what is meant by the word schism in Scripture, and what that same word was undoubtedly understood to mean in the primitive Church.

Nor do the Methodists differ from us in the signification of the word schism, nor do they hesitate in ascribing a great degree of guilt unto it, whenever the question has respected a separation from their Church : as the following account testifies.

“ Mr. Wm. Hammett, one of the Methodist missionaries sent
“ to the West Indies, having in the beginning of the year 1791,
“ landed in America for the recovery of his health, he was cor-
“ dially received by the Methodists in the United States ; but
“ unhappily differing with his colleagues, he made a *schism* and
“ divided the society in Charleston. He appealed to the English
“ conference, by sending them an account of the difference.
“ The matter was now considered ; and it was dismissed by
“ sending the following letter to Mr. Asbury and all the Ameri-
“ can preachers. In which the English brethren express the
“ closest union with their American brethren.”

“ To Mr. ASBURY, and all the AMERICAN PREACHERS.
“ Very dear Brethren,

“ We are desired by the English conference to assure you
“ of their cordial love towards you. They earnestly desire that
“ the most cordial love may subsist without any interruption be-
“ tween you and them; and the most perfect union which the na-
“ ture of things will admit of.

“ They esteem union and concord among brethren as one of
“ the greatest of blessings; and therefore do most deeply disap-
“ prove of the *Schism* which Wm. Hammett has made in the
“ city of Charleston, and do acknowledge no farther connection
“ with him who could so attempt to *rend the body of Christ*.

“ Wishing you every possible blessing in Jesus Christ, both in
“ your souls and in your labours, we remain,

“ Your truly affectionate brethren,

“ Signed, in behalf of the conference,

“ ALEX. MATHER, President.

“ THOMAS COKE, Secretary.

“ London, August 15th, 1792.

“ This letter was printed and circulated at the unanimous re-
“ quest of the general conference met in Baltimore in Novem-
“ ber, 1792.” See *Myles*, p. 220 and 221.

But let us return to our remarks on Dr. Coke's Sermon, from which we conclude, that he has acknowledged the separation of the Methodists in America, from the Church, to be very liable to be esteemed “ a *Schism*.” And a Schism all true Episcopalians are compelled to esteem it.

Indeed, had the Church imposed any articles of false doctrine on the Methodists as times of union and communion, or, had the

Methodists discovered the Church to be without a valid ministry, and consequently without a right to administer the sacrament of salvation; this separation of theirs could not justly have been called "*a schism*;" provided, that in separating they had immediately united themselves to some body of Christians among whom these objections could not be found, or had taken care to procure for themselves a valid ministry; being at the same time willing to hold communion with every body of Christians, which held all essential doctrines, which imposed no unlawful terms of communion, and which possessed a valid ministry.—Now Mr. Wesley and the Methodists in general, have in the most solemn manner repeatedly approved of the doctrine of the Church; they have never charged her with proposing unlawful terms of communion; and have, even in their separation, fully subscribed to the validity of her ministry, by attempting to prove the validity of their own, "*because*," say they, "*it is derived from Mr. Wesley, a presbyter*," but only a presbyter, "*of the Church of England*."

To the Donatistical sentiment of late so much advanced by the Methodists, viz. "That an unconverted man cannot be a Minister of the word and sacraments; and that all the ministrations of such a man are of no avail;" we might be content to refer our readers to one of those *Articles of the Church of England*, which Mr. Wesley has so often and so warmly approbated. But as the American Methodists have rejected *that article*, we will give them a quotation from a book still of great authority among them. We lament as much as they can do, that any unworthy ministers are to be found attending on the altars of God: and we cannot avoid attaching blame to those governors of the Church who may be remiss, (*if any such there are*,) in exercising the powers intrusted to them to the utmost, to purge the temple of the Lord from every thing which might have a tendency to cause men to despise the sacred offerings: but then, we, at the same time, fully agree in sentiment with the late Rev. John Wesley and the 26th article of our Church when they tell us, "that the unworthiness of the Minister hinders not the effect of the sacraments in those, who, being properly prepared, duly and rightly receive them." Mr. Wesley's words are these, as quoted from his twelfth discourse on our Lord's sermon on the mount. "*The validity of the ordinance doth not depend on the goodness of him that administers, but on the faithfulness of him who ordained it, who will and doth meet us in his appointed ways. Even by those who are under a curse themselves, God can and doth give us his blessing, for the bread which they broke, we have experimentally known to be the communion of the body of Christ; and the cup which God blest even by their unhallowed lips, was to us the communion of the blood of Christ.*"

In the conference sermon it is also said, respecting Mr. Wesley's authority. "We are fully persuaded there is no Church office which he judges expedient for the welfare of the people entrusted to his charge, but, as essential to his station, he has power to ordain."

Here a plenitude of power is attributed to Mr. Wesley, by Dr. Coke, or, by *Mr. Wesley to himself*, equal to that which Christ bestowed upon the apostles: nay in one point of view, equal to that which Christ enjoyed. For the apostles acted not but agreeably to the directions their Lord gave them before he ascended up on high, when he conversed with them respecting the things of the kingdom of God; and agreeably to the directions given them manifestly and undoubtedly by the holy spirit of God.

But, as Mr. Wesley's *determinations* were to bear down all opposition to the *new plan*, so it should appear, that Dr. Coke expected a declaration of his *persuasion* would prevent any argument upon the subject. And, if so, the event proved he was right. For this clause contains, secretly, a doctrine which we believe, few of the Methodists at that time would have subscribed to, although Mr. Wesley had *determined* and Dr. Coke was *fully persuaded*, had they beheld it stripped of its covering and exposed to the light. By it, Mr. Wesley's judgment is declared infallible, his power in Church matters unlimited: he may devise Church governments upon *new plans*, he may institute as many orders in the ministry as he chuses, and mould and fashion the church of God as he thinks proper: his own judgment of the expediency of the thing is deemed sufficient authority for him to act upon. But, before we can receive this doctrine we must have better proofs of its truth, than any which have yet been afforded, as we do not esteem ourselves bound to submit either to Mr. Wesley's *determinations*, or Dr. Coke's *persuasions*. Nothing less than the evidence of undoubted miracles in proof of Mr. Wesley's having received an apostolic commission immediately from Christ can justify such a position: for, by his ordination he became invested with no such powers; and, the flagrant and frequent violation of his ordination vows, would have justified any bishop in whose diocese he had committed the fault, in depriving him of the exercise of those he did possess. It was the lenity of the governors of the Church, and not the justice of his proceedings, which preserved even the exercise of those unto him. This is intimated by one of his biographers, (*Dr. Whitehead*,) who attests the mild and conciliating manner in which the rulers of the Church conducted themselves towards the leaders of the sect. See *Whitehead*, Vol. 1, p. 200, &c.

—Among "the people entrusted to his charge."

He exercised his power not by right of his ordination
Merely—like as the founder, under God, of Methodism

How Mr. Wesley obtained these people to be entrusted to his charge, the following quotation will enable the reader to form a very probable conjecture; nay, I may say a pretty correct opinion. It is taken from a note, page 431, Nett's Sermons.

"There is perhaps no one part of Mr. Wesley's conduct more justly reprehensible than the following:—His avowed object in establishing his societies in any parish, was, to call the regular minister to a sense of his duty; and, consequently, when this end was answered, he was to withdraw his interference. Some clergymen, who were such zealous advocates for Mr. Wesley's principles, that they even attended the conferences of the meeting, sensible of the inconvenience attendant upon Mr. Wesley's interference, desired him to give up the societies which he had formed in their respective parishes, to their care. This he refused to do; and his plea was, that he could not do it, and preserve a conscience void of offence towards God and man. Mr. Wesley's letter on the occasion is preserved in *Coke's Life of Wesley*, p. 244." An extract from that letter I now subjoin.

HELSTON CORNWALL, SEPT. 16th, 1757.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Nothing can be more kind than the mentioning to me what you think is amiss in my conduct. — — — — —

You say, "If you believed Mr. Vowler to be a gracious man, and a gospel minister, why did you not, in justice to your people, leave them to him."

J. H. assured me that Mr. Vowler had a clear conviction of his being reconciled to God. If so, I could not deny his being a gracious person. And I heard him preach the *true*, though not the *whole* gospel. But had it been the whole, there are several reasons why I did not give up the people to him. 1st, No one mentioned or intimated such a thing, nor did it once enter into my thoughts. But if it had, 2d, *I do not know* that every one who preaches the truth, has wisdom and experience to govern a flock: *I do not know* that Mr. Vowler in particular has. He may, or, he may not. 3d, *I do not know* whether he would or could give that flock the advantages for holiness which they now enjoy: and to leave them to him, before *I was assured* of this, would be neither justice nor mercy. 4th, Unless they were also assured of this, they could not in conscience give up themselves to him. And I have neither right nor power to dispose of them contrary to their conscience.

"But they are *his* already by legal establishment."

If they receive the sacrament from him thrice a year, and attend his ministrations on the Lord's day, *I see* no more which the law requires. But to go a little deeper into this matter of legal establishment. Does Mr. Conon or you think, that the king and

parliament have a right to prescribe *to me*, what pastor *I* should use? if they prescribe one which *I know* God has never sent, am *I* obliged to receive him? if he be sent of God can *I* receive him with a clear conscience till *I know* he is? and when *I do*, if *I* believe my former pastor is more profitable to my soul, can I leave him without sin?

I speak as a fool: bear with me, I am clearly satisfied you have more faith, more love, and more of the mind which was in Christ than I have. But have you *more gifts* for the work of God? or *more fruit* of your labour? has God owned you more? I would he had a thousand fold! I pray God he may! have you at present more experience of the wisdom of the world and the devices of satan? or of the manner and method wherein it pleases God to counterwork them in this period of his providence? are you sure, that God would add nothing to *you*, by me? (besides what he might add to me by you.) Perhaps when the time is slipt out of your hands, when I am no more seen, you may wish you had not rejected the assistance of even your

Affectionate brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

To the Rev. Mr. Walker,
in Truro.

Is no spiritual pride, no mock humility, no egotism to be discovered in this curious letter? read and consider it well, and you will not long, gentle reader, be ignorant what spirit its author was of.

"If he be sent of God, can I receive him with a clear conscience, till I know he is?" to Mr. Wesley and his pretended apostolic powers and extraordinary calling, we shall apply Mr. Wesley's own words. If Mr. Wesley *be sent of God*, as a new apostle: if he be endowed with extraordinary powers: if he be invested with an extraordinary commission from heaven, to found new Churches upon new plans, to institute a new ministry and new means of grace; and to overthrow all ancient and apostolic order, to make way for his own: can *we*, with a clear conscience receive him in this capacity, till we know him to be really such, and to have been so commissioned by irrefragable proofs and undoubted testimonies, far beyond those, which even mussulmen themselves are able to produce in favour of the pretensions of the founder of their religion? No! God forbid.

Dr. Coke has not been disappointed in his expectation that the work he came to America to perform, would be called "*a Schism*." It must be both called and regarded as a schism, by all true Episcopalians, so long as the Methodists retain the ministry derived from Mr. Wesley, and until they re-unite themselves on apostolic principles with some true and pure Episcopalian church of

Christ. With Dr. Coke's declaration of readiness to answer for thus "rending the body of Christ" at the bar of God, we have nothing to do. But, we find it *our duty to set our faces against this Schism as flint*, and to exhort all true Episcopalians to refrain from communicating with the Methodists in their schism, to abstain from giving countenance to this schism by attendance on its meetings, and to withhold sanctioning, in any shape, schismatical proceedings; lest they should be involved in the guilt, and be found encouragers and abettors of the deadly sin of Schism, which St. Paul declares to be a carnal sin, and such as will, without timely repentance and amendment, shut a man out of the kingdom of God.

CHAPTER V.

AT the conference which we now speak of, a circular letter from Mr. Wesley was published, dated September 10, 1784, being the same which he gave to Dr. Coke at the time he undertook to make him a new-planned bishop. The following extract of that celebrated letter is copied from Coke and More's "*Life of Wesley*," p. 352.

Bristol, September 10, 1784.

To Dr. COKE, Mr. ASBURY, and our Brethren in NORTH AMERICA.

By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from their mother country, and erected into independent states. The English government has no authority over them either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the states of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the Congress, partly by the provincial assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these states desire my advice; and in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

For many years I have been importuned from time to time, to exercise the right of ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused: not only for peace's sake; but because I was determined, as little as possible to violate the established order of the national Church to which I belonged.

But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction.

In America there are none neither any parish ministers. So that for some hundred miles together, there is none either to baptize, or to administer the Lord's supper. Here therefore my scruples are at an end : and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.

I have accordingly appointed* Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury, to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America: as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them; by baptizing and administering the Lord's supper. And I also advise the elders to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's day.

If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

It has indeed been proposed, to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object, 1st. I desired the bishop of London to ordain only one ; but could not prevail : 2d. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings, but the matter admits of no delay. 3d. If they would ordain them *now*, they would likewise expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us? 4th. As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the state, and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty to follow the Scriptures and the Primitive Church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty, wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

JOHN WESLEY.

Before we proceed to our remarks on this letter, it is proper to inform our readers, that Dr. Coke has not given the whole of what Mr. Wesley wrote in the one he gave him to be printed and circulated in America, but only a mutilated extract. To those who have seen it entire and considered it well, the reason why the Doctor curtailed it, will be sufficiently apparent.

"For many years," says Mr. Wesley, "I have been importuned from time to time, to exercise the right of ordaining part of our travelling preachers."

"*Right*!"—Whence was this right obtained? I repeat the question and answer as before....Not from his ordination as a presbyter of the Church of England. If it be said he obtained it from heaven; let his credentials be produced. When and where did he obtain it? We cannot in conscience believe Mr. Wesley himself without more proof than his own assertions: neither is the

* How cautious! To use the expression *I have appointed*, instead of *I have ordained*!

persuasion of Dr. Coke sufficient to convince us, who says Mr. Wesley received his powers in the order of God.

If I am not misinformed, Mr. Wesley himself during the years spoken of, entertained no idea of possessing any such right, although he assumed, in the case of James Wheatly, the power of suspending from preaching and PRACTISING PHYSIC!!!—See *Myles*, p. 65.

“But I have still refused;” continues Mr. Wesley, “not only ‘for peace’ sake; but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national Church to which I belonged.”

Mr. Wesley was, like many others, a lover of peace when he could have his own way, or when he found opposition would be unavailing or hurtful to his cause: but there are very few, if any, instances recorded of him, to shew that he was willing to give up even the smallest trifle where his own importance was concerned. It would have been full as becoming in him, and far more agreeable to his character as a presbyter of the Church of England, to have said, “I received orders, ’tis true, as a presbyter, to administer the word and sacraments as the Church and realm of England receives the same; but no power did I receive by my ordination to ordain either bishops, elders or deacons, and I fear, I have rather gone too far in undertaking to commission lay-preachers. I have, therefore, constantly refused to ordain because I had no right so to do.”

A circumstance is recorded by Mr. Myles in his “Chronological History of the Methodists:” which shews, that Mr. Wesley had no idea of the right of presbyters to ordain; otherwise, he would not have applied to *Erasmus, Bishop of Arcadia in Crete*, when in London, to ordain Dr. Jones. The account of which circumstance, with remarks thereon, will be found in the appendix, No. 3.

But Mr. Wesley says, “he was determined to violate as little as possible, the established order of the national Church to which he belonged.”

Should a servant in a well furnished house, bring in a number of persons to assist him in taking away every thing it contained, and they should strip it bare, though by degrees; we should not think it a sufficient excuse to exculpate him from the two-fold guilt of breach of trust and theft, was he to say, “I only brought in those people to help me, I took away as little as possible; not a single article but what I found expedient for me to take, and what I felt I wanted. I am exceedingly attached to my master’s household, I love his children, I venerate his regulations, I would not injure his interest for the world; but then Duty—Duty to a superior master, my own infallible judgment, teaches me, that not to gratify my own feelings and inclinations, which are always in favour of my beloved master, would be unpardonable. In-

"deed, it was my love for my master's furniture which caused me to act thus ; and, I loved the furniture, merely for my master's sake."

In some respects, the case of Mr. Wesley was similar to this. He was placed in the Church as a guard and preserver of established order ; and had solemnly promised at the altar of God, (*not erected in a private chamber,*) faithfully to perform this service ; yet he caused it to be violated wherever he went, and took every opportunity of enticing others to do the same. By his ordination he engaged to exercise his ministry in subordination to his bishop and other chief ministers, which by the divine institutions, the polity of the Church, and the laws of his country, were set over him, following with a ready mind their godly admonitions. Yet to these admonitions, contempt alone was returned. To the Church he was ever professing his attachment, and yet, from a very early period of his ministry to the close of a long life ; he was violating her order, in one point or another, till there was scarcely one point left, which he had not violated. He not only violated points of order, but mutilated some articles of her faith, and rejected others, *in toto* : he new moulded her worship and invaded the exclusive right of the highest order of her ministry. In this last point he violated the laws of the Catholic or universal Church of Christ, as well as those of that particular branch thereof, to which he belonged. Had Mr. Wesley found, that he could not, with a clear conscience, obey the laws and orders of the Church to which he belonged ; he ought to have quitted her communion ; we might then have esteemed him a man of sincerity and integrity though mistaken : but these frequent, and warmly expressed, professions of attachment to the Church, whilst violating every order of the Church ; seem to imply a very high degree of spiritual pride, cunning, artifice, and sinister design.

We might trace the similitude still farther, but it sufficeth to say, that Mr. Wesley violated every order which stood in his way, and then said, "I was determined to violate them as little as possible" !!!

In fine, it appears that *feelings* and *inclinations* were the pointers-out of duty to Mr. Wesley, who certainly had a great ambition to be esteemed "*some great one*," since he declared his astonishment that Bengelius could have assigned the year 1836, for the conversion of all nations to the faith of Christ, because, he must have heard of his preaching ! See *Hampson's Life of Wesley*, Vol. 2, p. 4. What an excessive vanity, the founder of Methodism must have possessed, who unblushingly could thus undertake to become the Herald of his own fame ! for my own part, I must confess, that I am inclined to think Mr. Wesley's flagrant violation of order more calculated to bring about that state of

things Sir Walter Raleigh speaks of. "When," says he, "all order, discipline, and Church government, shall be left to newness of opinion, and men's fancies; soon after, as many kinds of religion will spring up, as there are Parish Churches with in England; every contentious and ignorant person, clothing his fancy with the *spirit of God*, and his imagination with the gift of revelation; insomuch as when the truth, which is but *one*, shall appear, to the simple multitude, no less variable than contrary to itself, the faith of men will soon after die away by degrees, and all religion be held in scorn and contempt." See *Hist. of the World*, b. 2, c. 5, Sec. 1.

The subject of the next two paragraphs of the circular letter has already been considered, when speaking of the situation of the Methodists in America, before the *peace*, and the chamber ordinations in the city of Bristol.

"If any one will point out a more rational and scriptural way," and it suits with my own FEELINGS and INCLINATIONS, he should have added: "of feeding and guiding those poor sheep in the wilderness, I will readily embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken."

Love of an extensive influence and dominion, seems to have bewildered Mr. Wesley's understanding on this occasion; however infallible and under the immediate influence of divine direction he might esteem it: or else he was of the number of those concerning whom it is said "None are so blind as they who will not see." Was Mr. Wesley in the land of the living, we might thus address him: "Why did you not advise with your old and approved friend and brother, the Rev. Charles Wesley. He was in Bristol at your elbow. What had he done to forfeit your confidence and affections? Was he deficient in offering up incense on the altar you had erected to your own vanity? Did he presume to think you were not endowed with an extraordinary commission, nor invested with the plenitude of apostolic power? Did he dare to suggest that your inspiration was only ordinary, and that you possessed no more authority in the church of God than what every truly ordained presbyter possesses? Or did you think that God had so far forgotten his promise to his church, that he would suffer those poor sheep in the wilderness to perish with hunger, unless you violated his orders to feed them? You had great faith sometimes, Mr. Wesley, about very childish things; but now your faith is very small indeed, even in a very important case to which the promise of God is made. You were unwilling to let patience have her perfect work, or to wait the time when God would be pleased to visit his flock according to his word. But, most probably, you was afraid that if you did not make haste to constitute yourself their *apostle* and *bishop*, and get them into

"your power, some other pastors might be sent with clearer testimonies of their right to guide and feed them, than any you had received, or had power to bestow. And 'tis more than merely probable you had received some intimation of this, for it was well known that Dr. Seabury had been nigh two years in England to solicit episcopal consecration; and, owing to some legal difficulties, which prevented his obtaining it, was on the point of setting out for Scotland to be consecrated there, when you undertook to make Dr. Coke what you was pleased to call a bishop. These circumstances we will venture to say, were not unknown to you, since we are certain from your brother Charles's letter to Dr. Chandler, that he was apprized thereof."

"The best course you could have taken, both for the sake of peace and order, in my humble opinion, would have been to have exhorted your American brethren to wait a little longer with patience, to have informed them that relief in a regular and apostolic mode was, most probably, not far distant; and, that in the mean time, if they would diligently improve what opportunities they had of exercising their religion, both in public and private; God would bless them, and bestow on them all needful blessing of grace, *without their partaking of the ordinances*, since in his divine providence he had permitted them to be placed in a situation where they could not regularly and validly obtain them. This way of acting, however, would not have acquired for you the honor of becoming *bishop maker*, nor of founding new Churches on new filans. Yes, Mr. Wesley, you seem to have been long convinced, as one of your biographers intimates, that had you been content to have exercised your ministry in conformity to your most solemn ordination vows, though you might have been admired as a scholar and a man, you could never have expected to have ranked with the apostles."— See Coke's *Life of Wesley*, p. 81.

"In fine, Mr. Wesley, you had forgot what your brother Samuel once read in a letter wrote by you to him. *He that took care of the poor sheep before you was born, will not forget them when you are dead.*"

The next and last part of the circular letter, contains Mr. Wesley's reasons why he did not apply to the English bishops to ordain some of the travelling preachers for America.

"1st. I desired the bishop of London, to ordain only one; but could not prevail."

This one was a person who wished to go as chaplain in lord Cornwallis's army to America. How we came to know this particular, may be seen in the Appendix, No. 1. Mr. Wesley had assumed for a long time both an ecclesiastical and medical supremacy, now it would seem as if he thought he had a right to assume civil powers also, and appoint who should be chaplains to ar-

mies! If that person had been presented to the office by the proper authority, there is no doubt, but that the bishop would have ordained him, had he found him, upon examination, properly qualified, of which, he, as the ordainer, was to be the judge, not Mr. Wesley.

"2d. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings: but the matter admits of no delay."

It was a part of the advice of St. Paul to Timothy, and consequently, to all bishops, to "*lay hands suddenly on no man.*" And certainly Mr. Wesley ought not to have blamed the bishops for slowness in so important a matter, particularly, when in so doing, they were acting agreeably to the directions given them in holy scripture.

Had the bishop of Londonderry observed this apostolic advice in the case of Mr. Maxfield; and had desisted altogether from ordaining him, notwithstanding the solicitations of Mr. Wesley or any other person; he would have saved Mr. Wesley from a vast deal of trouble, and the cause of Methodism from much disgrace.

I would recommend it to the American Methodists, to peruse with attention the case of Mr. Maxfield. It is stated at full by Coke in the *Life of Wesley*, p. 260 to 267.

"But the matter admits of no delay." What! were the ordinances so essentially necessary to salvation, that in no possible case salvation might be obtained without them? surely Mr. Wesley held not such doctrine. But whether he did or did not, he ought to have considered that ordinances administered by those without authority could have been obtained in America at any time, without his troubling himself to ordain Whatcoat, Vasey and Coke, and exposing them to the danger of a sea voyage of three thousand miles for that purpose: and also, that ordinances so administered are null, void and sacrilegious. He ought likewise to have known, that the persons whom he ordained were not ministers according to Christ's appointment, but only of his own: and that, whatever other sects might think of the matter, he was imposing a *spurious episcopacy* and *ministry* upon his American brethren who as well as himself professed to believe the Episcopalian form of Church government to be the most excellent, and, consequently, the most apostolic. No material mischief could have arisen from a little longer delay. But, by this over haste, a schism has been created which seems to be resolved to introduce all the abominations of all ancient and modern heresies combined.

But the real meaning couched in these words, "*this matter admits no delay*;" appears to me, from a consideration of all circumstances, to be this. A separation and an independent Church was resolved upon, presbytery for several reasons would not an-

According to the Methodist practice could have been ordained.

swer for the government intended for this Church. Episcopacy was to be declared the *most excellent*, for two reasons, because it was the best adapted to the purpose designed, and, because a considerable majority of the people were both from habit and education attached to Episcopacy : I mean, of those people who were to form the *new Church*. Mr. Wesley's determinations were expected to carry *conviction* with them, and his reputation for holiness was to supply all deficiencies of power in himself, and to excuse his assumption of episcopacy. All this seems to have been determined and reckoned upon. But delay might have ruined all, and blasted Wesley and his episcopacy for ever. It was necessary that the *false bishops* should gain a footing before the true ones appeared. For bishop Seabury had, the month before the separating conference sat at Baltimore, received consecration from three Scotch bishops : and it was expected that though his application in England had failed, that another from a different part of the states would prove more successful, and that permission would be given by parliament to the English bishops to consecrate bishops for some of the middle or southern states. These bishops would have been very generally recognized by the Methodists, their veneration for Mr. Wesley would have gradually decreased, and all he had hitherto done to get his name immortalized as the apostle of the eighteenth century would have dwindled into nothing. This is my real opinion of the matter, but I press this opinion on no one ; let every one consider for himself and form his own opinion.

I know that many persons will be shocked at my making so free with Mr. Wesley's character : since by his followers, he is called that "*Wonderful man of God*," that "*man raised up by God*," that "*messenger of God*," some have called him an "*angel*" "*hostle of God*, and others have gone so far as to teach that he was prophesied of, by St. John in the revelations, and seen by him, under the appearance of an angel flying through the midst of heaven. But if he really was all this, his conduct becomes the more proper subject of investigation, in order that from the discovery of the reality of his claims, we may be the more inclined to bestow upon him, that veneration which would then be his due. As I, however, neither esteem him an angel nor an apostle, I hold myself at full liberty to examine into his conduct, with the same freedom, and to judge of his motives from his public actions and sayings ; as I would of those of any other public and celebrated character. With his private life I presume not to meddle. I view him only in the capacity of a founder of a new sect. " 3d, " If they would ordain them now, they would expect to govern " them. And how grievously would this entangle us."

" They would expect to govern them." Aye, there's the rub. — But why should Mr. Wesley entertain any alarm on that ac-

count? he had by his own example taught them far different conduct, than to submit to bishops because they had ordained them whatever those bishops might expect: they had only to say *they were inspired* to break order, that they had certain *feelings* and *inclinations*, and that a *sense of duty* forbade them to obey the laws and governors of the Church: and this, from his example, would absolve them from every prior obligation. I expect, however, that the real fear was, that, if the English bishops had ordained them, Mr. Wesley would have had some difficulty in governing them. He could not then have sent them where he pleased, nor have suspended them at his will, either from preaching, or *practising physic*. Their continuance under his direction would then have depended as much on their will and pleasure as on his: and a dissolution of the connection between them, would not have been followed by a deprivation of their ministerial powers. This the father and monarch of Methodism, who was "resolute and determined" in every thing he took in hand, &c, "whose mind none could" in his earlier days, "change, but he that made it," as his brother Samuel writes; could not possibly brook: no means, therefore, remained, to prevent this, but for him to ordain them himself. He did so, as we have seen, in the city of Bristol, but in a smuggling like manner: and now, forsooth, his spurious brood of new fangled bishops, elders and deacons are inflamed with fierce rage and anger, at all true Episcopalians, for not renouncing their principles, in order to salute them, as their rightful and valid teachers in the Church of God.

"It seems to have been the general opinion," says *Hampson*, Vol. 3 p. 23, "that Mr. Wesley had determined, while at Oxford, to place himself at the head of a sect." He then goes on to mention several circumstances of Mr. Wesley, which concurred "to confirm many in this opinion." Mr. Hampson does not subscribe to it himself: but, as he asserts, that the great defect of Mr. Wesley's character was the *love of power*; and as he proves with what perseverance he sought, and with what obstinacy he maintained the right of governing his sect *absolutely*, we still shall be inclined to think that ambition might be, and really was, a motive, others perhaps, concurring with Mr. Wesley to form a *new Church* in America, upon a *new plan* of his own invention. See *Hampson*, Vol. 3 p. 202.

"Ambition," says *Nott*, in a note p. 307, "and the love of absolute power in governing his sect, seems to have been a motive which operated much more strongly in Mr. Wesley than in Mr. Whitefield. It is in reference therefore to him particularly, that the following observation, I presume, was made. Since the establishment of the Jesuits, we cannot meet with an instance of such a vast body, as that of the Methodists, managed with so much dexterity, and yielding so complete

"obedience to the will of one man. See a review of the policy, doctrines, and morals of the Methodists, p. 2. To prove that this is not an exaggerated account. See Whitehead, Vol. 2, p. 474. Where he shews in what manner Mr. Wesley, by exercising his power which was absolute, could like a mighty torrent, gathering strength in its progress; influence the opinions of between 4 & 500,000 people, on any important occasion, which might either concern the societies, or the nation at large." The same system is carried on, and with nearly the same success, by the present leaders of Mr. Wesley's Church in America. The system is somewhat similar to that of Weishaupt, and deserves the name of "ILLUMINATION for the well disposed."

As I have suggested that Mr. Wesley seems to have been influenced by vanity and spiritual pride, in many of his proceedings: that I may not be accused of attacking his character, without authority, I will present the reader with the following extract from the fifth sermon of Geo. Fred. Nott, B. D. on religious enthusiasm. And if the smallest spark of candor remains in the breast, the most rigid Methodist must confess, on the perusal of it; that Mr. Wesley was guilty, in a very high degree indeed, of the crimes we have alledged against him.

"If more positive proof than deductions such as these, be required, we may ask, and let every one answer the question impartially for himself, whether it be likely that more positive proof can ever be expected? each enthusiast, no doubt, will think that he is worthy to receive the distinction which he fancies he has obtained. It is not to be expected, however, that any one, in whom the rational faculties remain entire, should so far forget all humility, should so entirely overlook the sinfulness of human nature, as to assert, that he grounded his belief in the reality of his mission, upon the conviction that the almighty could not have selected a more fit person, on whom to confer it. If holy David is known to have said, *who am I, Lord God, that thou should'st bestow upon me the promise of the kingdom?* If he, who was miraculously called to deliver the children of Israel, should exclaim, *who am I, that I should bring them forth?* It seems in no shape probable, that any one could ever arrogate to himself a peculiar fitness to receive a divine commission: were he to do so, this would doubtless be considered as a decisive proof both of his enthusiasm, and the cause which had produced it: but is this a proof which can ever reasonably be expected? certainly not. Yet even this proof has been afforded us"—by Mr. Wesley. Read the following quotation from Mr. Wesley's 3d appeal, p. 114, et seq. Read, and astonishment will seize you at the sight of such unparralleled arrogance.

"I know" he says, "that the establishment of our communion may be opposed, because many of its teachers are reputed bad.—but with regard to myself, the wisdom of God has guarded against this pretence in a remarkable manner."

Then enumerating the particulars of his life, he says, "What a surprising apparatus of providence is here! what person could have been less liable to objection than MYSELF, WHOM THE ALMIGHTY HATH EMPLOYED? indeed, I cannot devise what manner of man could have been more unexceptionable on all accounts. I see not what God could have done more in this respect, which he hath not done; nor what instrument he could have employed in such a work, less liable to exception." Thus far Mr. Wesley.

"How would the spirit of St. Paul have glowed with indignation could he have heard such sentiments as these! how would he have abhorred himself could he ever have been induced to employ a language so presumptuous! and yet, if ever any person, surely he might have had occasion to glory. His revelations were more abundant than those his fellow laborers enjoyed. His call to the ministry was, in one respect, even more immediately from God, than that which the other apostles received. The purity of his intentions, was unimpeached. His zeal, his sufferings, his patience were unexampled. Yet all this was so far from suggesting to his mind that he was the fittest person that could have been selected to perform the work assigned to him, that his unassuming spirit was filled with wonder and self-abasement, when he contemplated the amazing love of his heavenly master, in condescending to employ an instrument, so weak, and so unworthy."

The next thing we shall notice, as having taken place at this conference, is the ordination business. Let us therefore now attend to the twice making of a Methodist or Presbyterian bishop, in order that he might be imposed on Episcopalians as a bishop once truly made so.

I have adopted this mode of speaking in allusion to the attempts of certain persons to prove the validity of Methodist Episcopacy from Presbyterian principles. These persons say, "bishops and presbyter are one and the same order. Mr. Wesley was a bishop, because he was a presbyter. And the Methodist Church being governed by a presbyter, who by being so is also a bishop, has a right to call herself an Episcopal Church." But to proceed.—

Dr. Coke invested with all the powers Mr. Wesley could give him for the purpose, appears as the apostle of a new sort of apostles, and elevated, no doubt, a little higher than his natural size, begins that *peculiar work* he had crossed the Atlantic to perform. viz. "to rend the body of Christ," as he in union with Mr. Mather was pleased to call Mr. Hammet's schism. This piece of

parchment, (an indignity to which, he so severely punished in the person of Mr. Jarret, by gibbeting him in his Journal,) we presume, was laid on the table, (soon to be yclep'd "*an altar*," as the "*meeting house*" was to be transformed into "*a Church*;") signed and sealed by the self created apostle and bishop, John, the father of the plan now to be put in execution. Francis with solemn pace advances, and soon becomes a new fashioned kind of deacon. A short time intervenes and Francis again appears before the *little Doctor*, who with his two assistants, quickly accomplish the making of him a *newly devised* elder, or presbyter, or *bishop* according to the arguments of many Methodists, now adays ; but, as these Presbyterian kind of bishops would not answer even for Methodists in those days, it was found needful for Francis to pass through a third ceremony, and be again dubb'd to something more, in appearance, of power and title, than what he had before received, so that the gaping croud might think him truly a bishop, because John Wesley had said he should be so, and because Dr. Coke had thrice, Messrs. Whatcoat and Vasey twice, and Mr. Otterbine once, laid their hands upon him : but, as Mr. Wesley was no bishop, Dr. Coke was none : and therefore, a thousand ordinations from such ordainers, were no better than one ; and Francis was as good a bishop in the opinion of all true Episcopalians before Dr. Coke had laid his hands upon him at all, as he was after he had thrice done it. If the Presbyterians are willing to esteem him as one their kind of presbyters or bishops, I am satisfied they should so esteem him ; but both they, & the Methodists, should know, that honesty requires us not to remove our neighbour's land-mark ; therefore, if Methodist bishop means no more than a Presbyterian presbyter, let the Methodists tell us so at once, and not seek to confound and destroy all antient and universally received principles, in order that, in the confusion, they may pass for what they have not the smallest pretension to.

But the fact is, that it was not intended, to be esteemed a Presbyterian ordination, but an Episcopalian one ; and this Presbyterian plea, we are confident, was only meant as a *reserve*, that in case, it should ever be examined, and proved not Episcopal, it might find shelter under Presbyterian principles. But, to attempt to defend it on those principles, while it retains the name of Episcopal, while the body which receives it, calls itself an Episcopalian Church, and while that same body solemnly declares the Episcopalian form of Church government to be the *most excellent* ; is *paltry quibbling*, and *pitiful subterfuge*. Had it not been for the *officious intrusion* of a Presbyterian, who signed himself, "*an OBSERVER*," during the Easton controversy, these reflections of Presbyterianism might have been dispensed with, as I have not the smallest design to irritate the feelings of that body

of mistaken, as *I believe*, but, as *I also believe*, respectable body of men. Nevertheless, if even *they*, with their new auxiliaries, the Methodists, should feel themselves inclined to attack Episcopalianism, we are under no kind of apprehension respecting the result of the contest.

But the question is not at present what was the original mode of ordination and Church government : therefore it is unnecessary for us now to enquire whether the words *bishop* and *presbyter* were indiscriminately used in the first century or not ; tho' I will be bold to say, that if they were, when applied to the second order in the ministry, they were not so used, when the first order was spoken of. It is also far from being needful, on this occasion, to examine the pretensions of the advocates for a parity among the clergy. For nigh fifteen hundred years, at least, the whole Christian world was episcopal ; and, since the reformation, all sects of Christians have known what was meant by the word *Episcopacy*, and what by the word *Presbytery*. There are different and distinct ideas annexed to these words ; and I trust will continue to be, whatever attempts the Methodists, or others, may make to confound them, in order, no doubt, to answer some certain purpose, not openly declared.

The Presbyterians, it is well known, acknowledge but one order in the ministry of the word and sacraments ; and assert that all such ministers are equal in power and authority. The Episcopalians acknowledge three orders, of which the highest alone has the power to ordain, and which is called the order of bishops. Bishops are believed by Episcopalians to have succeeded to the apostles in the government of the Church, and to have transmitted their authority down to those who at present hold that office, and who, as successors of the apostles, are superior to, and distinct from presbyters ; or even those, who are said, by some persons to have been called, in the apostolic age, bishops or presbyters indiscriminately. Now as all the ordinations of the Methodists are derived from Mr. Wesley, who was only an Episcopalian presbyter, it is manifest, that those ordinations are null on Episcopalian principles : and, having no true Episcopalian orders, they can have no claim to the title of an Episcopal Church, more than the Quakers have while retaining their present system : unless we may except that right which the civil constitution has tacitly given them of calling themselves what they please. But, if they think this privilege sufficient to constitute them a true Episcopalian Church of Christ, they have left not only true Episcopacy, but Presbytery also, and have gone over to a new modification of Erastianism.

But it seems Wesley had *determined* the point, Coke professed to be *fully persuaded* of it, Asbury *accepted* of it, and the pliant conference declared themselves *satisfied* with it : and also, that

they were fully convinced of the validity of this curious kind of, so called, Episcopal ordination: and did unanimously receive Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury as their bishops!

Thus a complete separation was accomplished and a schism organized, not only from the Protestant Episcopal Church of England in America, but from all true Episcopal Churches in the world. It is a vain excuse to say, as a writer says in the *Republican Star*, 18th Nov. 1806, printed at Easton Maryland, that at that time there was no Church of England in America to separate from. It is indeed true that by the revolution, that part of the Church which was in America, became absolved from all those civil obligations, & was freed from all those accidental circumstances attending upon the same Church in England in consequence of the close connection between Church and state; yet did she not cease to be still a part of the same Church, and even now is in union and communion with her in all spiritual concerns. Nor did the Methodists at the time of holding their *separating conference* suppose, that the revolution had made any change in the Church, more than in name and temporal situation; for in the 3d section of the Methodist book of discipline, speaking of the Church of England, the conference uses the following words, "We fear the same spirit will lead the SAME CHURCH, though altered in name," &c. 'Tis true, this passage is left out in some of the last editions; for the Methodists are in the habit of adding and diminishing as they find convenient and serviceable to their cause: but its having been inserted in even one authorised edition, is sufficient to convict that writer of a cavilling disposition, and to prove the absurdity of his excuse for *his schism*, when he said for that purpose, "That the Methodist Church was older by five years than the Protestant Episcopal Church, and that, when the Methodist Church was formed they had never heard of such a Church!!" O schism! to what pitiful shifts art thou oft reduced!

Scarcely less pitiful was the answer Mr. Wesley gave on a certain occasion mentioned by the Rev. Mr. Jones in his *Life of bishop Horne*. He tells us, that a gentleman was sent to Mr. Wesley to enquire of him, whether he had really undertaken to consecrate Dr. Coke, and send him to America? Mr. Wesley replied, he had; and assigned as a reason, that he had done it because the Baptists were tearing the Church to pieces. Thus in his affected tenderness to the Church, he created one schism to stop the progress of another. The event has proved him to have been a most miserable tinker, for in attempting to stop one hole, he has been the instrument of making many more. For now we have Methodist Episcopalians, so called; republican Methodists; *Presbyterian Episcopalian* Methodists; independent Methodists; still Methodists; jumping, dancing, shouting, falling

The P.E. Church did not exist *Agon* - Episcopalian brought until five years after the Organization of the M.E.

and jerking Methodists; and Methodistical workers of the mystery of disorder and disorganization among all denominations of Christians; Methodist Episcopalians, so called, not excepted.

As I should imagine, the Methodists must be convinced that Presbyterian grounds of defence will not answer for them; or be at all available to prove the validity of their Episcopacy: I expect they will resort next to Phœbus's principles, and rest it on the asserted inspired apostleship of John Wesley and his pretended extraordinary calling. Before they do this, I would wish them to reflect a little, and consider what will be the consequences of taking up such principles of defence. For, if there be any mode of determining that a man is not inspired of God, that mode when applied to the Rev. Messrs. Wesley and Whitefield, will prove them neither to have been *inspired* of God, nor *extraordinarily commissioned* by him.

Each of these gentlemen claimed to himself, and their followers for them, a divine and extraordinary call from heaven to evangelize. And for many years each acknowledged the divine call of the other. But at length a diversity of interest produced a diversity of calls. John was expressly commanded by God, if John was inspired, to preach against George; and George was expressly commanded by God, if George was inspired, to preach against John. Here was inspiration against inspiration, and call against call. That this is not an exaggerated or unfair statement the following quotations will abundantly testify.

Mr. Whitefield says in his letters, "*Alas! I never read any thing that Calvin wrote; my doctrines I had from Christ and his apostles; I was taught them of God.*" Again—In his account of God's dealings, p. 34—He says, "The holy spirit from time to time has led me into the knowledge of divine things, and I have been directed, by reading the scriptures and watching upon my knees, even in the *minutest circumstances*, as plainly as the Jews were, when consulting the Urim and Thummim at the High Priest's breast."

And also—"Election is a doctrine, which I thought and do now believe, was taught me of God." See *Gillie's Life of Whitefield*, p. 68.

Mr. Wesley also asserted as may be seen in the Gentleman's Magazine, Vol. 11, p. 322. "That he had an *immediate call* from God to preach and publish to the world, that Mr. Whitefield's doctrine is highly injurious to Christ."

"To detail the manner in which these two pretendedly inspired men conducted themselves when they separated, would be to wound all sensibility; each professedly preaching a different gospel. They indeed describe themselves as consulting the Almighty in a manner equally puerile and superstitious; such as by a mode similar to the *Sortes Virgilianæ*: they ac-

"cuse God of having deceived them, when events turned not out as they imagined their lot had decided, in terms both impious and unequivocal ; and they are guilty of such deliberate falsehood, as no one could have been, who was really guided by the Holy Ghost, and filled, as they declared themselves to have been, with God. Nor do we need to insist on the bitter wrath, the strife and fierce dissensions between them.* Let us attend solely to the statement of the case. We are solemnly assured by two men, that thy were each sent to preach the pure gospel of salvation by the immediate call of the Almighty. We find however, that they not only contradicted each other, but that each considered himself as commanded by the Almighty to oppose the doctrine which the other taught. One of them, therefore must have been under the influence of delusion. But when we find that neither of them was consistent with himself, † when we discover that though they affirmed that they had been divinely instructed what to teach, they nevertheless both of them professed one day, doctrines which they disclaimed and controverted on the next ; we have no alternative but to determine that they were both alike deluded by the enthusiastic spirit."

Now whatever evidences might be produced in favor of Mr. Wesley's divine and extraordinary mission and elevation to the apostolate ; the same may be produced in favor of Mr. Whitefield's : and yet, that he was deluded in the manner we suppose : we have his own unequivocal confession to prove. See his works Vol. 4, p. 243. In which are the following express and unambiguous words : " I do confess that imagination has mixed itself with the work I have performed : I own too, that I have made impressions without the written word my rule of acting : I have been too bitter in my zeal ; wildfire has mixed with it : and I find I have frequently written and spoken too much in my own spirit, when I thought I was writing and speaking entirely by the assistance of the spirit of God."

* Consult Whitefield's works, Vol. 4, p. 53. Wesley's fourth Journal, p. 59. Gent. Mag. Vol. 11, p. 321 and Coke's Life of Wesley p's. 171, 172; 173. Whitehead, Vol. 1, p. 206. Nott's Sermons, p. 247 et seq. The charge of falsehood is confined to Mr. Whitefield, and proved against him by the Rev. Mr. Well, whose letter is preserved in Gent. Mag. Vol. 11, p. 321.

† For proof that Mr. Wesley was not : See his note on 1st. Cor. 14th chap. 32d verse, and compare it with the 8th paragraph of his Sermon on Enthusiasm. Instances of the like nature, are too numerous in his works to be specified on this occasion : But there is one I cannot omit—Mr. Wesley, in *Preface to his Hymns*, says " The condition of our acceptance with God is not our holiness, either of heart or life, but faith alone : Faith as *contra distinguished* from holiness, as well as from good works." But, in his sermon on *Ephes. 2 c. 8 verse* he says—" We speak of a faith, which is necessarily inclusive of all good works, and all holiness." Gent. Mag. Vol. 9, p. 358. Nott's Sermons in the notes, p. 246. Tucker's history, p. 51, et seq.

Are these declarations such as are consistent with the character of a man who was filled with the Holy Ghost? of one who talked with God, as he assures us he had done, as a man with his friend? who was confident that the blessed Jesus was ever present with him, and dwelt continually in his soul? See *Whitefield's Letters*, p. 214 and 229, and *Nott's Sermons*, p. 253—Unquestionably they are not: and what is the inference to be drawn in consequence? let us for a moment suppose the apostles had been called upon to reconsider their conduct. Would they have been obliged to own, that, even in one single occasion, they had been deluded by the force of imagination? far, very far different would have been their language. They would have asserted, that they had at all times spoken the words of truth and soberness: and they would have confidently referred us to their writings for a testimony of the reality of their pretensions: those writings which have stood the test of so many ages, and cannot be charged in a singular instance with error or enthusiasm.

We will suppose however, that the contrary had been the case: how should we then have been affected? if one of the evangelists, having published his gospel, and having testified that it was true because “he knew that the Holy Ghost had called all things to his remembrance:” was afterwards to declare, that the greater part of what he had written was dictated by the spirit of enthusiasm, should we not acknowledge that the whole fabric of our faith would be in consequence shaken? should we not call in question the reality of that disciple's mission, and even renounce altogether a religion that was supported by testimony so equivocal?

Dr. Coke himself has laid the axe to the root of Mr. Wesley's inspired apostleship and extraordinary commission to found a new Church in America, upon a new plan, and to institute a new sort of *Episcopacy and ministry*; by declaring in his letter to bishop White of Pennsylvania, “That he” (Mr. Wesley) “went further,” in that business “than he would have gone if he had foreseen some events which followed.” See the letter itself in the *Appendix*, No. 2. “And that he is now sorry for the separation.”

And shall we allow that confessions of this nature had they been made by the apostles of Christianity, would have been sufficient to have made us reject their preaching? yet shall we not allow them to destroy the pretensions of the apostles of Methodism? for be it asked, why do we so jealously maintain that the apostles were not deluded by the enthusiastic spirit? certainly, because if the charge could be proved against them in a solitary instance, this must effect the credit of every doctrine which they delivered. It is not with revealed truth, as it is with human systems. These latter may be adopted, though we believe that in

some points they are erroneous : the former can be accepted only because they are in every part free from error. Could we imagine that a revelation was offered to us, which in part was true, and in part delusory, we might venture to say, that the result would be of the most alarming nature. For right and wrong coming to us proposed on an equal degree of authority, the bound of good and evil would be in a great measure confounded ; and we should be perpetually disobeying God, at the time when we believed ourselves implicitly following the dictates of his will.

If then the charge of delusion once proved against the apostles of Christianity, would justify a rejection of their pretensions ; unless we permit the same consideration to have the same weight when it applies to the apostles of Methodism, we shall afford an additional proof of the propensity of the human heart to prefer its own inventions to the commands of God ; and we shall, in a striking manner, verify the prediction of our divine Lord, who, accusing the Jews for their hardness of heart in rejecting his mission, though attested by every possible evidence, said, "*I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not : if another should come in his own name, him ye will receive.*"

Now after it being sufficiently ascertained that the founders of Methodism were enthusiasts and deluded, in what manner shall we account for that high reverence, which, even in the present day, is still paid to their memory? Will it not be astonishing to hear some repeat, notwithstanding all which may be proved against them, that they were the peculiar favourites of heaven, on whose ministry the Holy Ghost manifestly descended and rested? That they were angels to whom the everlasting gospel was intrusted? And finally, that they bore (I almost hesitate to repeat the assertion) a near resemblance to the blessed Jesus : that there never was beheld so fair a copy of our Lord ! such a living image of the Son of God?—See *Gillie's Life of Whitefield* and *Coke's Life of Wesley*, *passim*.

Not even to the best of men can expressions such as these be with justice applied ; but least of all to those, who, whatever their private virtues may have been, were disobedient and rebellious in the Church of Christ ; deceivers of themselves, by wilfully following their own imaginations : deceivers of the people, by persuading them that the Lord had said, albeit he had not spoken ; that he had bid them go forth, although he sent them not, nor commanded them.

The reader is desired to observe, that the latter part of this chapter on the subject of Mr. Wesley's and Mr. Whitefield's inspiration, and extraordinary call, is either extracted, or copied verbatim from the fourth sermon of Geo. Fred. Nott, on religious enthusiasm.

And now, I hope the Methodists, before they attempt to rest the validity of Methodist episcopacy on Mr. Wesley's inspiration, apostleship and extraordinary call; will establish that inspiration, apostleship and extraordinary call on grounds which will bear examination, and produce better proofs for the same than any we have hitherto heard or read of; and also, obviate all the preceding objections, and give satisfactory and plain answers thereunto.

Here we might close our examination of Methodist episcopacy, but as we are in possession of two documents we wish to see the light: and as a subsequent event took place among the Methodists, affecting the pretended apostolic powers of Mr. Wesley, proper to be a little more extensively known, than they will probably trouble themselves to make known: we shall extend our labour to another chapter.

The first of the documents is No. 1, Appendix, and may usefully be read as an introduction to the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

IN the month of May next following the separating conference, a little circumstance took place, no otherwise worthy of notice, than as it serves to shew *something* existing in the character and disposition of Mr. Wesley's apostle, very unlike any thing to be found in the characters of the true and undoubted apostles of Christianity.

An address was prepared to be presented to General Washington, then President of the United States. It was called "*The address of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*" To this address an answer was, no doubt, expected; which would certainly be prefaced with these words: "*To the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*" This was an excellent expedient to obtain a little consequence for the *newly devised Episcopacy*. For who should dare to say Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury were not Bishops, when a President of the United States had called them by that title? And, especially when that President was no less a character, than the founder of the American nation; the virtuous, the illustrious WASHINGTON? No one can venerate the name of that great man more than the author of this pamphlet; but, had twenty presidents, many Washingtons, an hundred kings, two hundred emperors, or the congresses, or parliaments, or assemblies of the whole earth called them, Bishops; their united power could not

make them so, in the ecclesiastical sense of the word; or, could confer upon them the spiritual rights of bishops: therefore, General Washington having called them, Bishops, was not worth a single chaff unto them. He called them so out of mere complaisance. He called them "Bishops," because they called themselves "Bishops."

When Dr. Coke mentions his visit, in company with Mr. Asbury, to present this address, he gives great and just praise to the hospitable host of Mount Vernon. But, there is a passage in Dr. Coke's Journal which it had been better he had omitted; and he certainly would have done so, had not some small degree of vanity been predominating, in his mind, over prudence, when he wrote his Journal; although, I must confess, the Doctor wishes us not to think so. Dr. Coke, however, should have considered, that some, nay, that the majority of his readers, might be able to understand such passages as well as himself. "*I was loth,*" saith he, "*to leave him for I greatly love and admire him, and if there was no pride in it, would say, that we are KINDRED SPIRITS, FORMED IN THE SAME MOULD.*"——*risunt teneates amici.*—— is a trite quotation: yet here, it is peculiarly appropriate. "*Kindred spirits, formed in the same mould!*" why was not Mr. Asbury included in this kinship? "*Kindred spirits!*"—I cannot conceive what this kinship was grounded upon, unless on this consideration; that, as General Washington was the founder, under divine providence, of a great Empire; Dr. Coke also, esteemed himself the founder, under John Wesley, of a great Church; which, if craft and cunning device could prevail, he expected one day or other, not only to be the Church, but to possess the government of that great Empire; and that, on this account, his name like the General's, would be had in eternal remembrance.

This anecdote may serve as a specimen of the lowliness of mind of modern apostles.

In a pamphlet wrote by Mr. Nicholas Snethen, entitled, "*an Answer to James O'Kelly's vindication, &c.*" I find a circumstance mentioned, that took place at a subsequent conference, which shews that, however compliant the separating conference might be, the majority of the members of a following one, had acquired too much spirit to submit any longer implicitly to Mr. Wesley's determinations; and, though I mean not to justify their conduct, I think that Mr. Wesley met with no more than he had reason to expect, considering the example he had set his children.

"Among the rules offered by Dr. Coke" at the separating conference, "one was designed to preserve the future union between the British and American Methodists: Mr. Asbury objected to it, in the form it was proposed, as unreasonable, and highly improper: he thought, that as the societies in Ameri-

"ca had continued for such a number of years without any such
 "obligations, to require it immediately after the peace, would
 "be attended with unhappy political consequences, as it was a
 "well known circumstance, that Mr. Wesley had written in
 "favor of the British ministry: but the Dr. contended for it, and
 "Mr. Asbury agreed to submit, if it met with the approbation
 "of the preachers. The obligation being laid before the con-
 "ference, met with opposition; but it passed in the form in
 "which it is printed in the minutes: See page 2d, question 2d.
 "What can be done in order to preserve the future union of the
 "Methodists? Ans. During the life of the Rev. Mr. Wesley,
 "we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the Gospel, in matters
 "belonging to Church government to obey his commands. And
 "we do engage after his death, to do every thing that we judge
 "consistent with the cause of religion in America, and the poli-
 "tical interests of these states, to preserve and promote our uni-
 "on with the Methodists in Europe." At another conference
 "Mr. Wesley nominated Mr. Whatcoat for a superintendent or
 "one of his bishops. This nomination was produced by Dr. Coke
 "—But, in the separating conference, a rule had been made that
 "no person should be ordained a superintendent or *Methodist*
 "*bishop* without the consent of a majority of the conference."
 "When this nomination was laid before the conference, it was ask-
 "ed whether they were called to ratify the appointment implicitly,
 "or to vote discretionally. Dr. Coke insisted on the minute to
 "obey Mr. Wesley. And certainly, if the conference esteemed
 "Mr. Wesley as an apostle endowed with authority to found
 "churches on *new plans* and institute *new kind of Episcopacies*,
 "they ought to have obeyed him. But no—a vote was taken,
 "whether the conference ought not to reject the agreement to obey
 "Mr. Wesley in *all matters* of church government, rather than
 "give up the right of voting! The question was carried, and the
 "conference thus declared that they would not implicitly obey
 "Mr. Wesley or any other man; and as the conference saw no
 "want of a third bishop, so called, at that time, they refused to
 "elect one. Poor Wesley! he might then have exclaimed. "My
 "apostolic occupation's gone. My American children have re-
 "belled against me. 'Tis plain they believe me *not to be inspired*
 "*of God*, or called *extraordinarily* to govern the church: for
 "if they did, they would have obeyed me in the person of my
 "messenger to them; they would have executed the orders he
 "delivered in my name, and by my authority, as readily as the
 "churches of Ephesus and Crete obeyed the apostolic authori-
 "ty and orders of St. Paul, when made known to them by Ti-
 "mothy and Titus."

Mr. Wesley, however, was determined his apostolic occupa-
 "tion and bishop-making function should not be gone in Eu-

rope, if it was in America. For, but a very short time before his death, he overcame all his scruples about making bishops and other sorts of ministers; as he called them, to officiate even where there were bishops with a *legal* as well as *Ecclesiastical jurisdiction*. Dr. Coke tells us in his *Life of Wesley*, p. 383 that, a little before his death, he ordained a certain number without sending them out of England, strongly advising them at the same time, that *according to his example*, they should continue united to the established Church, so far as the work in which they were engaged would permit. Which in fact was the same as if he had said; "As far as you find will best promote the interests of Methodism."

A writer in the English Orthodox Churchman's Magazine, noticing this circumstance, says, "*Some persons may call this consistency, for our parts, we scruple not to call it political craft, and Jesuitical hypocrisy.*"

While on the subject of Mr. Wesley's ordinations, I shall notice a passage in a piece published at Easton. The writer asserts that Methodist episcopacy and ordinations originated with three presbyters of the Church of England, whom he mentions by name, viz. Mr. Wesley, Mr. Creighton and Mr. Fletcher, and that these three gentlemen ordained Dr. Coke a bishop. Now if Mr. Fletcher was not assisting on that occasion, Dr. Coke was not ordained to his spurious episcopate by more than *two presbyters* of the Church of England; for neither Whatcoat nor Vasey had ever received any ordination whatever in that Church. And, I will venture to believe, and were I to assert it, it would not be a rash assertion, that Mr. Fletcher had no hand whatever, in what I scruple not to call a sacrilegious act. But to turn from this digression, to our subject.

In page 18 of Mr. Snethen's pamphlet, we are told "that Dr. Coke blamed Mr. Asbury for the time being in the hurry, because he did not stir up a *hornets nest*." What! did Mr. Snethen then consider the dispositions of his brethren to be such, as rendered them liable to be compared, when assembled together, to a nest of irritable, malicious, stinging and poisonous insects? That many persons may have reason to make such a comparison, I have no doubt; but, that Mr. Snethen should do so, is more than we should have expected. Truth, however, will sometimes come out, when least looked for.

"When the news went to England," continues Mr. Snethen, "that the American preachers had refused to elect Mr. Whatcoat; one of the preachers who had been on the continent, was not backward in declaring that he was a true prophet, and that *Frank Asbury*, so he called him, was at the bottom of the whole business. Dr. Coke upon his return to Europe made matters more plain; and Mr. Wesley wrote to Mr. Asbury,

"blaming him for not rising up and declaring, that unless the preachers would continue to acknowledge the printed minutes or obligations, he would leave the continent."

This conduct of the conference is what we presume occasioned a proposal to be made by Dr. Coke, with the sanction, if not actually by the order of Mr. Wesley, on his next visit to America, to bishop White of Pennsylvania, for a re-union with the Protestant Episcopal Church, *other motives also*, no doubt, *concurring*; and, we are justified in this supposition by some expressions in the letter written by Dr. Coke to bishop White on that occasion. *See Dr. Coke's letter, No. 2, in the Appendix.*

In the course of the controversy carried on at Easton, among other things, the following letter was published, as tending to cast some light on the subject under discussion.

PHILADELPHIA, JULY 30th, 1804.

REV'D SIR,

I received your letter of the 27th instant, under circumstances which prevented my answering it by return of post—with it there was delivered a letter from the Rev. J. McClaskey; whom I find to be the person alluded to in yours. Having written to this gentleman, my transcribing of the information given him, will be an answer to you also.

I beg it may be understood, that I have never from the suggestion of my own mind, given information of the matter concerning which you enquire, except to those whom Dr. Coke expected to be informed of it. Several years passed since the transaction, before I had reason to suppose it known to any others. Within these few years, I have been spoken to on the subject two or three times; when I found myself under a necessity of stating facts, in order to guard against misrepresentation.

In the spring of the year 1791, I received a letter from Dr. Coke, on the subject of uniting the Methodist society with the Protestant Episcopal Church. An answer was returned. In consequence of which, Dr. Coke on his coming to town, made me a visit, having not then received my letter, but having heard that I had written. Our conversation turned chiefly on the aforesaid subject. The general outlines of Dr. Coke's plan were, a re-ordination of the Methodist ministers, and their continuing under the superintendence then existing, and on the practices of their peculiar institutions. There was also suggested by him a propriety, but not a *condition made*, of admitting to the Episcopacy, himself and the gentleman associated with him in the superintendence of the Methodist societies. This intercourse was communicated at the time from Dr. Coke to Dr. Magaw. I do not know of any other person then informed of it, unless I may except the gentleman above alluded to *by whom*, if I have been rightly informed, *my letter to Dr. Coke was opened in his absence*;

such a freedom being understood, as I supposed, to arise out of the connection between the two gentlemen. But for this part of the statement I cannot vouch. It was understood between Dr. Coke and me, that the proposal should be communicated to the bishops of the Episcopal Church at the next convention, which was to be in September, 1792, in New-York. This was accordingly done. After which, I perceived no use of further communication on the subject; and I have not since seen Dr. Coke, nor heard from him, nor written to him.

It appears to me that the above comprehends either *explicitly* or by *implication*, all the points to which your letter leads. It would have been more agreeable to me, if no occasion of this testimony had occurred; and it is now given, merely to prevent the matter being understood otherwise than it really is.

The above is what I have written to Mr. M^cClaskey; and I remain, &c. &c.

Your affectionate brother,

WILLIAM WHITE.

It is not at all material for me to enquire into the reasons why bishop White was solicited to give this testimony; since the person who gave it publicity declared he did so chiefly to cast some light on the subject of Methodist Episcopacy.

In which view alone, I stop to make a few remarks on certain passages which it contains.

A union we find is proposed between a *society* and a *Church*.

That body of men cannot justly be called a Church of Christ, which, though united under certain rules and regulations, and having officers to see to the execution of those rules, has not, within itself a valid Christian ministry, to preach the word of God *with authority*, and to administer *duly* the sacraments of man's redemption. If a body be deficient in these essentials, and the object it has in view be the advancement of religion, it may be called a *religious society*, but not a church. This, however, is no detriment to the society so long as it preserves union and communion with a body which contains every essential of a church according to the divine institutions of Christ and his apostles.

Now the Methodist society was in this situation before the schism, and it appears to have been the object of the proposed union to restore matters to the same situation. It was a *society* applying for a readmission into *the Church*, and not two equally independent bodies that were to be considered as negotiating terms of union. The society could, and did acknowledge the Church she applied to, as a true Church of Christ; but that Church could and did only look upon that society, since the separation, as a schismatical body, not constituting any part of the Church of Christ. The Methodists, however, considered as a society, had peculiar rules and institutions, which, in case of a

No Church -

union, they were desirous of preserving ; on this account, one part of Dr. Coke's outline, was an article providing that the Methodists should retain their peculiarities : in so doing, it would become necessary that they should be under the superintendence of some of their own members ; and certainly, none could be found so fitting, as they who for several years had enjoyed that office.

But, as many of the preachers of the *society*, had received such a kind of ordination, as we have given an history of in the preceding pages ; and, as those ordinations could never be esteemed valid by the *Church* ; a condition was proposed by Dr. Coke, that the Methodist ministers should be *re-ordained*. Consequently, if *these* were to be re-ordained in order to the union ; the Wesleyan bishops must have refrained from ever ordaining any person in future, till they were consecrated true bishops of the Church, by the bishops of the Episcopal Church ; and, in case this was not consented to by the Church, they must have confined their superintendence solely to the peculiar institutions and regulations of the Methodist society. For should they have ordained even *one person* with their *kind of ordination*, they would have broke the union. Ordination, as lord Mansfield said, is *separation*.

The proposal, therefore, of Dr. Coke, respecting the re-ordination of the Methodist ministers, is in itself tantamount to an acknowledgment of the nullity of Wesleyan ordination. It is, to say the least, an acknowledgment, by necessary implication, *that Methodist ordinations are not Episcopal*—General Washington having saluted Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury, "*bishops*," notwithstanding.

The next passage I shall notice, is that where Dr. Coke is said to have " suggested a propriety, but not a condition made, of admitting himself" and Mr. Asbury " to the episcopacy." Now there is no way whereby a man can become capable of being admitted to the episcopacy, or to exercise the work and office of a bishop in any true Episcopal Church but by a consecration to that work and office by other true bishops : and Dr. Coke knew very well that neither himself nor Mr. Asbury had ever been consecrated bishops, by any persons whom the Episcopal Church could acknowledge as true bishops : for if they had, the re-ordination of those whom they had ordained would not have been necessary. Therefore this bare suggestion of being admitted to the episcopacy, *implies* a desire and willingness to be consecrated : a willingness to be consecrated, *implies* a readiness to relinquish all powers supposed to be conferred by any pretended prior consecration, till re-consecrated : a re-consecration, *implies* that the former act called Consecration was invalid. Now no person who is acquainted with the tenets of all true Episcopalian Churches,

can hesitate a moment to believe, that Dr. Coke having suggested the *propriety of his admission, &c.* must be supposed to have admitted all the consequences which naturally and necessarily flow from such a suggestion; and that he must have had some doubts respecting the validity of his Wesleyan consecration, by being willing it should be set aside as null; which it must have been, had he been admitted to the episcopacy of the Protestant Episcopal Church: and indeed, had the union taken place without his admission to the episcopacy, it must have met with the same fate. This is necessarily implied, as was observed, in the condition for the re-ordination of the Methodist ministers.

But as this admission was not to be made a condition of the union, it follows that the union was not to be prevented by the refusal to admit Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury to the episcopacy: so that, in that case, had the union taken place, the Methodist superintendents must have confined their superintendence to their own society, merely as presidents and managers, and not *as bishops truly consecrated*, or invested with any of those powers which Episcopalians believe are peculiarly and exclusively given to bishops truly consecrated.

These consequences seem to have been sufficiently proved to have flowed from Bishop White's letter, in the course of the controversy to which I have more than once alluded, and which gave rise to the present publication. But as they were denied by the writer on the Methodist side, who put many far-fetched and forced constructions on the letter, resorted to Deistical historians, and made many bold assertions respecting the proposed union, for which he was not able to produce a single proof, and also endeavoured by mere quibbling and cavilling to make this letter speak a language favourable to the cause of Methodist Episcopacy: it was thought proper by a gentleman who felt an interest in the result of the contest, to inform Bishop White of the use the advocate for Wesleyan Episcopacy had made of his letter; and at the same time to request from him a more explicit account of Dr. Coke's application and avowed motives. To that gentleman the bishop very politely sent the following letter.

Philadelphia, September 13, 1806.

Rev. and dear Sir,

I received your letter this day, and answer it immediately.

In compliance with your desire, I send you the following information taken from Dr. Coke's letter now before me.

His plan was that all the ordained ministers then in the Methodist connection should receive *Episcopal Ordination*. Of these, he says, that they will not, and ought not to give up their right of administering the sacraments; but he thinks that the general-

ity of them would not refuse to be re-ordained, and that perhaps none would so refuse.

Of the other preachers, he says, that they would hardly submit to a *re-union*, if the possibility of their rising up to ordination depended on the present bishops of America. The difficulty which he foresees on this score, is grounded on their not being acquainted with the learned languages. What was his intended mean of removal of this difficulty does not appear in the letter. It may have been, a promise on the part of the bishops, that the ordination of the persons in question should not be prevented by that circumstance. Or, it may have been the consecration of himself, and the gentleman connected with him; for this measure was hinted in a conversation that afterwards took place between us, altho' he desired me to remark, that it was not made a condition of the union.

The motive of Dr. Coke in this business, as stated in his letter, seems to have been an apprehension that he had gone further in the *separation* than had been intended by Mr. Wesley from whom he had received his commission. *Mr. Wesley himself*, he was sure, *had gone further than he would have gone, if he had foreseen some events which followed.* The Dr. was certain, that the same gentleman *was sorry for the separation*; and would use *his influence* to the utmost; for accomplishing a *re-union*.

Perhaps it may be proper to add, that Dr. Coke expresses himself certain that the gentleman connected with him in the superintendence, would be *adverse to the contemplated measure*; and gives it as a reason for accomplishing it before the death of Mr. Wesley.

It is on my part a matter of justice to your opponents, to make the offer of shewing Dr. Coke's letter to any gentleman, who at their desire shall apply for an opportunity of perusing it. You will be so good as to cause this to be made known to them.

I am sorry you should be exposed to the inconvenience of a controversy on the subject, but trust you will manifest a Christian temper in the management of it. We too often find, on such occasions, a disregard of the admonitions of the apostle, that the "wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

The use of this letter is submitted to your discretion, and I remain your

Affectionate Brother,

WILLIAM WHITE.

Soon after the receipt of this letter the controversy was dropt, in consequence of an unwillingness in the printer to publish any thing more on the subject; he having, as we have been told, received letters from some influential Methodists, *advising* him on the subject.

I would therefore beg leave to remind all readers of that controversy, to notice the various shiftings, and different grounds, the Methodist writer takes in order to defend his episcopacy ; and to remark, that when he is driven from all those grounds, how quickly and unprovokedly he takes up the language of abuse, and violently attacks the Church by the arts of confounding, mistating and detailing the falshoods and misrepresentations of the infidel Hume, instead of answering the arguments of his opponents.

From this second letter, we learn, that Dr. Coke's plan was, " that all the ordained ministers then in the Methodist connection " should receive *Episcopal Ordination*."

This itself amounts to a confession on the part of Dr. Coke, that their former ordination was *not Episcopal*. And why? Because neither Mr. Asbury, himself, nor Mr. Wesley were ever truly consecrated bishops.

But, as these ministers had received a kind of ordination, Dr. Coke says, " they will not, and ought not to give up their right " of administering the sacraments."

By the doctrine of Episcopalians, they had no right whatever, in virtue of *that ordination* to administer the sacraments. But Dr. Coke, probably, like some others, who might be called *tertium quid* Episcopalians ; might think, that though that ordination was *not Episcopal*, yet it was Presbyterian ; and that Presbyterian ordination was not altogether nugatory. However, the meaning of this passage appears plainly to be this ; that these persons having received a kind of ordination ; and having, in consequence thereof, been in the practice of acting as presbyters and deacons, would not consent, nor ought they to be degraded to the rank of lay-preachers ; and, as an expedient to prevent the necessity of such a measure, he proposed, that they should receive Episcopal ordination : and declared his opinion that the generality of them would not refuse to be re-ordained, and probably none would so refuse.

A question rises from this point of the proposed union, viz. What would have been the situation of those who might refuse to be re-ordained, or to receive *Episcopal ordination*? the answer is plain and evident, viz. They could not possibly be admitted into the union, as clergymen, nor could their ministrations have been sanctioned as valid, by those who were included in the union. They must, therefore, have been considered as abiding still in schism, and in a state of separation from the Church.

The next paragraph of the letter requires no comment. It is no more than an explanation of that passage in the first letter, which respected the suggestion made by Dr. Coke, of admitting himself and Mr. Asbury into the Episcopacy, by a *true and valid consecration* to the work and office of bishops in the Church of God. It is, however, equivalent, to a concession on the part

of Dr. Coke, that the ordination conferred on him by Mr. Wesley, was *not episcopal* ; and that it did not make him any whit a bishop, more than he was before.

In the paragraph following, the *separation* is acknowledged ; and Dr. Coke seems to apprehend he had gone further in it, than Mr. Wesley designed. But be this as it will, we do not find that Mr. Wesley ever expressed his disapprobation of it, till after the rejection of his nomination of Mr. Whatcoat to the superintendency.

But Dr. Coke proceeds and says, that Mr. Wesley *himself* had gone farther than he would have gone, had he foreseen some *events* which followed. This itself is a sufficient evidence that Mr. Wesley acted not in that affair by the peculiar direction and inspiration of the holy spirit of God, but according to the dictates of his own fallible judgment, will and inclination.

One of *those events which followed*, we presume was *that* we have just above mentioned, and which deprived him of the implicit obedience of his children in America. Indeed, we doubt whether ever this confession would have been made, had it not been for *that event*. "Mr. Wesley is sorry for the *separation*, "and will use his influence to the utmost to accomplish a *re-union*."

His influence !—How art thou fallen, O John ! a few years ago, thy *determinations* were sufficient : now, thou art obliged to have dependance on *weakened and dying influence* for the accomplishment of thy designs. Alas ! I fear it was still weaker than either Dr. Coke or thyself imagined. Thou now findest that thy example has been followed, and that *those whom thou, by thy deputies didst ordain, will not obey the power that ordained them*. This comes from thy own violation of order. Thy right hand man in the United States, thou now perceivest, is, as it were, in league against thee. He will be adverse to the measure. So says Dr. Coke ; and so we believe he would have been. However, the convention of the church on the one hand, and the death of Mr. Wesley on the other ; put a stop to all further proceedings on this subject : and, the Methodists still continue in a state of schism and separation from the church. And having only the same kind of orders they received at the time of the separating conference, their ministrations are, and must be, esteemed null and void, and to rest solely on the insufficient ground of mere human device, by all true Episcopalians.

CONCLUSION.

I cannot conclude this subject, in discussing which, I have been obliged oftentimes to speak a language, which I could have wish'd the candor and moderation of the Methodists would have

justified me in rendering less severe ; better than by giving two quotations from late writers ; and a declaration of my own dispositions respecting Christian communion with other denominations of Christians.

The first is from the "*Life of Dr. Johnson, by Dr. Chandler,*" p. 151.

"There are sound persons who assert, that all inquiries concerning the mode of conveying from the divine head of the Church, the authority of the priesthood ; are trivial, useless, and even hostile to the interests of piety ; and that those who engage in them betray a narrowness of mind and disposition incompatible with the enlarged love of truth, and with *Christian charity.*" As if the love of truth forbade us to detect delusion, and Christian charity obliged us to flatter and countenance error. "But may not the language of the expostulation be justly raised against those who sport these assertions ?—The advocates of episcopacy, while they are anxious to enforce, what the Universal Church has always maintained, the necessity and efficacy of the ministrations of a *valid priesthood*, and the duty of preserving the *unity* of the spirit in the bond of peace ; do not presumptuously withhold the mercies of God from any who *sincerely seek to know and do his will.*"

With all who name the name of Christ I should rejoice to be in fellowship and to hold communion : but alas ! in the present unhappy and divided state of the Christian world, this is not possible. Some societies, which are indeed truly constituted upon an apostolic foundation, and are therefore a part of the Church of Christ, impose what I conceive to be unlawful, and therefore to me, sinful terms of communion, obliging me to profess a belief in things, I cannot believe. In other societies a valid ministry is wanting. In those two cases, although I can esteem the members of those communities as my brethren, and wish them every temporal and spiritual blessing, yet communication with them in the sacred ordinances of religion, would, I esteem, be very improper, and, I really think, very sinful. But with all those bodies of Christians who are properly constituted upon an apostolic foundation, and impose no improper or unlawful terms of communion, I esteem myself as much in fellowship, as with that church of which I profess myself a member, and which, on an examination of the controversies which have taken place between her and her adversaries at different times, I am convinced, is as pure in her doctrine, and as apostolic in her ministry, as any church upon earth. Would to God her members would duly prize, and live up to their inestimable privileges.

The last quotation, with which I shall finish this work, is from the preface to "*Essays on Episcopacy*" by Dr. Hobart of New-York.

The imputation of *uncharitableness* and bigotry, liberally applied by many to the advocates of episcopacy, is disclaimed as equally ungenerous and unjust. The same imputation has always been urged, by the opponents of the truths of revelation, against the advocates of these truths. It has pleased God to make *his Church* the channel of his *covenanted* mercies to the world. Christians, universally, for fifteen centuries, considered the priesthood, in the order of bishops, priests and deacons, as one of the essential characteristics of the church; and considered the reception of the ordinances administered by his priesthood as the divinely appointed mode of entering into covenant with God. But though the institutions of the Almighty are indispensibly binding upon man, he is not himself restricted by them. Every benevolent heart, therefore, ardently cherishes the delightful belief, that mercy will at length be extended to all who humbly and earnestly seek to know and do the will of their heavenly master. In the sincerity of his soul, the writer (of that preface, and also, the writer of this pamphlet) can adopt and cherish the sentiments avowed by the distinguished prelate; * who still honors and promotes by his erudition and talents, the cause of science and religion; and, who, for his zealous defence of primitive faith and order, has been frequently branded with the charges of intolerance and bigotry."

"Though truth in *these controversies* can be only on one side; he will indulge, and he will avow the charitable opinion that sincerely may be on both. And he will enjoy the reflection, that, by an equal sincerity, † through the power of that blood which was equally shed for all, both parties may at length find equal mercy. In the transport of this holy hope, he will anticipate that glorious consummation, when faith shall be absorbed in knowledge, and the fire of controversy for ever quenched. When the same generous zeal for God and truth, which too often in this world of folly and confusion, sets those at variance whom the similitude of virtuous dispositions should unite, shall be the cement of an indissoluble friendship; when the innumerable company (of the redeemed) of all nations, kindreds and people,

* Bishop Horsley.

† Christian charity can require no more than the admission that those who differ from us are sincere. While we differ from them in points which we esteem essential, we cannot avoid believing them to be in error. For if they be right, we must be wrong, and, were we convinced of this, we should be obliged in conscience to relinquish our errors. It is, however, only to persons that are humble teachable, candid and correct in their deportment, that we can consistently allow the merit of sincerity. It is impossible, and indeed cannot be required, we should thus think of those men, whose zeal assumes the arts and devices of faction, whose judgment is manifestly perverted by prejudice, and whose religion renders them more, austere and unamiable.

assemble round the throne, shall like the first Christians, be of one soul and one mind; giving praise with one consent to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb that was slain to redeem them with his blood."

THE END.

L^d Coke desired, doubtless, a re-
union with the F & Church on
the same grounds that Paul
circumcised Timothy - See 1
Cor. 9. 20 on Acts 16. 3 -
y.s.

APPENDIX.

No. 1.

COPY of a letter written by Dr. Andrews to Dr. Smith, giving an account of an interview between Mr. West, Dr. Andrews, Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury.

Baltimore, December 31, 1784.

DEAR SIR,

I promised to give you some account of what should pass at our proposed conference with Dr. Coke. It is an account however, which I fear will be no ways interesting, and from which at any rate you can derive little satisfaction.

At the appointed hour, which was six in the evening, he did not fail to attend us; and brought with him Mr. Goff and Mr. Asbury. We drank tea, and conversed on indifferent subjects. The Doctor was full of vivacity and entertained us with a number of little anecdotes not disagreeably. At length I took occasion to observe, that we had seen Mr. Wesley's letter of September last addressed to Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury; as also a book entitled the Sunday Service of the Methodists: that we were happy to find from these publications that the people called Methodists were hereafter to use the same liturgy that we make use of, to adhere to the same articles, and to keep up the same *three orders of the clergy*; that these circumstances had induced us to hope, that the breach which had so long subsisted in our Church might at length, in America at least, be happily closed: that we could not think so unfavourably of the gentlemen who were at the head of that society, as to suppose they could persist in *separating* from us, merely for the sake of *separating*; or cherish in their breasts so unkind a spirit, as would not suffer them even in doing of the very same things that we do, to have any satisfaction without doing them in a different manner;—with such variations in point of form and other circumstances, as may create an invidious distinction where there is no real difference: that the plan of Church government which we had instituted in this state, was a very simple, and, as we trusted, a very rational plan: that it was to be exercised by a convention consisting of an equal number of laity and clergy; and having for their president a bishop

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electd by the whole body of the clergy : that this bishop was to differ from a common presbyter in nothing else than in the right of presiding in the convention, of ordaining ministers, and administering confirmation after baptism to as many as desired it : that such an episcopacy, at the same time that it possessed all the powers requisite for spiritual purposes, would not upon any occasion or to any person be either dangerous or burdensome. It could not be said to *entangle* men more than Mr. Wesley's episcopacy *entangled* them. What occasion then could there be for a separation from us on the score of government ? And as to articles of faith and form of worship, they already agreed with us. If it would not be so grateful to them to have their preachers ordained by a presbyter taken from among us and *consecrated a bishop*, what hindered but that Dr. Coke might be so *consecrated* : we could see no impropriety in having two bishops in one state, one of which might always be elected from among the people called Methodists, so long as that distinction should be kept up among us.

To all this Dr. Coke made the following reply. That indeed he scarce knew what answer to give us ; as such an address had neither been foreseen nor expected : that any propositions, however, that we should think proper to make on the subject he could transmit to Mr. Wesley. Perhaps we were strangers to their itinerant and circuitous maxims : that it was not proposed that any of their ministers should ever have a fixed residence : and that for his own part he was inclin'd to think that our two churches might not improperly be compared to a couple of earthen basons set afloat in a current of water, which so long as they should continue to float in two parallel lines, would float securely : but the moment they began to converge were in danger of destroying each other.

Mr. Asbury was pleas'd to add,—that the difference between us lay not so much in doctrines and forms of worship as in experience and practice. He complain'd that the Methodists had always been treated by us, with abundance of contempt ; and that for his own part, tho' he had travelled over all parts of this continent, there were but four clergymen of our Church, from whom he had received any civilities. In expressing these sentiments, however, he did not mean to throw any reflection upon Mr. West and myself, whom, from the accounts he had received concerning us, he regarded as worthy characters.

Mr. West begged it might be well understood, that in holding this discourse with them, we acted altogether in a private capacity, *wholly unauthorized so to do by the Church to which we belonged* ; and that in his opinion, the only material point to which it concern'd us at present to enquire into was simply this—*Was the plan upon which the Methodists were now proceeding to act, irrevocably fixed ?* Dr. Coke answer'd, that there was no person who

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took more time than Mr. Wesley to deliberate upon his plans, and none who after he had deliberated upon them was more prompt and decided in the execution of them.

Upon this the subject was dropt, and in a short time after they took their leave of us.

A day or two after I took the liberty to wait on Dr. Coke at his lodgings. I expressed a wish, that they could be induced to give rise to their orders in a regular manner; and this I observed they might do, and yet still continue to manage their own affairs. and remain as distinct a body from us as they might think proper. If they did not esteem it unlawful to *connect the succession*, I contended, that it was their duty *to connect it*, from motives of charity and of policy. By such compliance their departure from their brethren would be less considerable, and they would have fewer prejudices to encounter with.

Dr. Coke did not hesitate to acknowledge, *that it would be more consistent indeed, and more regular to connect the succession*; and that the time was when the Methodists might have been gained by a little condescension. But it was now too late to think of these things, when their plans were already adopted and in part even executed: that he himself had received ordination agreeably to this *new system*, & conferred it on others. He set forth in his turn the great contempt and aversion with which the Methodists had always been treated in England, by the generality of the bishops, as well as by the laity and clergy: that when one of their preachers had an inclination to come over to this country with lord Cornwallis' army under the character of a chaplain, Mr. Wesley could not prevail on the bishop of London to ordain him: that some clergymen of the Church of England, who had ventured to perform service in the countess of Huntingdon's chapel had been prosecuted in the court of Arches: that bishop Newton in his last dying charge to his clergy solemnly enjoined them, that they should never cease to oppose the Methodists: and upon the whole that such was the temper of the English prelates, that they would much rather chuse, that the whole body of the Methodists in England, tho' so very numerous, should be lost to the Church by a total separation, than that they should continue any longer with it.

To those particulars I made the best reply that I was able, apologized for the great trouble I had given them, and then took my leave of them in the most friendly and affectionate manner.

Thus ended our negotiation which served no other purpose than to discover to us, that the minds of *these gentlemen are not wholly free from resentment* and it is a point which among them is indispensibly necessary that *Mr. Wesley be the first link of the chain upon which their Church is suspended.*

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No. 2.

THE following is the copy of a letter addressed to me by the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke. To the best of my recollection it was never communicated or mentioned by me, except to those to whom it was intended by the writer to be made known; until I heard of it from others within these last few years. My reserve in this respect was not from any idea, that there was, or could reasonably have been exacted of me, secrecy in such a transaction; but for reasons it is not now necessary to mention. My giving of a copy of the letter is in consequence of its having been made a subject of public controversy; and merely with the view of preventing misconstruction and misrepresentation.

WILLIAM WHITE.

Philadelphia, Oct. 30th, 1806.

COPY.

Right Reverend Sir,

Permit me to intrude a little on your time upon a subject of great importance.

You, I believe, are conscious that I was brought up in the Church of England, and have been ordained a presbyter of that Church. For many years I was prejudiced, even I think, to bigotry in favor of it: but through a variety of causes and incidents, to mention which, would be tedious and useless, my mind was exceedingly biased on the other side of the question. In consequence of this, I am not sure but I went further in the separation of our Church in America, than Mr. Wesley from whom I had received my commission did intend. He did indeed solemnly invest me, *as far as he had a right so to do*, with Episcopal authority, but did not intend, I think, that our entire separation should take place. He being pressed by our friends on this side the water for ministers to administer the sacraments to them (there being very few clergy of the Church of England then in the states.) *He went further I am sure than he would have gone if he had foreseen some events which followed.* And this I am certain of—that he is now sorry for the separation.

But what can be done for a re-union, which I wish for; and to accomplish which Mr. Wesley I have no doubt would use his influence to the utmost? The affection of a very considerable number of the preachers and most of the people is very strong towards him, notwithstanding the excessive ill usage he received from a few. My interest also is not small; and both his and mine would readily and to the utmost be used to accomplish that (to us) very desirable object; if a readiness were shown by the bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church to re-unite.

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It is even to your church an object of great importance. We have now above 60,000 adults in our society in these states ; and about 250 travelling ministers and preachers ; besides a great number of local preachers, very far exceeding the number of travelling preachers ; and some of these local preachers are men of very considerable abilities : but if we number the Methodists as most people number the members of their church, viz. by the families which constantly attend the divine ordinances in their places of worship, they will make a larger body than you possibly conceive. The Society, I believe, may be safely multiplied by five on an average to give us our stated congregations ; which will then amount to 300,000. And if the calculation, which, I think some eminent writers have made, be just, that three-fifths of mankind are un-adult (if I may use the expression) at any given period, it will follow that all the families, the adults of which form our congregations in these states amount to 750,000. About one-fifth of these are blacks.

The work now extends in length from Boston to the south of Georgia ; and in breadth from the Atlantic to lake Champlain, Vermont, Albany, Redstone, Holstein, Kentucke, Cumberland, &c.

But there are many hindrances in the way. Can they be removed ?

1. Our ordained ministers will not, ought not, to give up their right of administering the sacraments. I don't think that the generality of them, perhaps none of them, would refuse to submit to a re-ordination, if other hindrances were removed out of the way. I must here observe, that between 60 and 70 only out of the two hundred and fifty have been ordained presbyters, and about 60 deacons (only). The presbyters are the choicest of the whole.

2. The other preachers would hardly submit to re-union, if the possibility of their rising up to ordination depended on the present bishops in America. Because, though they are all, I think I may say, zealous, pious and very useful men, yet they are not acquainted with the learned languages. Besides, they would argue, if the present bishops would waive the article of the learned languages, yet their successors might not.

My desire of a re-union is so sincere and earnest, that these difficulties make me tremble : *and yet something must be done before the death of Mr. Wesley, otherwise I shall despair of success* : for though my influence among the Methodists in these states as well as in Europe, is I doubt, not increasing, yet *Mr. Asbury, whose influence is very capital, will not easily comply : nay, I know he will be exceedingly averse to it.*

In Europe when some steps had been taken, tending to a separation, all is at an end. Mr. Wesley is a determined enemy

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of it, and I have lately borne an open and successful testimony against it.

Shall I be favored with a private interview with you in Philadelphia? I shall be there, God willing, on Tuesday the 17th of May. If this be agreeable, I'll beg of you just to signify it in a note directed to me at Mr. Jacob Baker's, merchant, Market-street Philadelphia: or if you please by a few lines sent me by the return of the post, at Philip Rogers Esq. in Baltimore, from yourself or Dr. Magaw: and I will wait upon you with my friend Dr. Magaw. We can then enlarge on the subjects.

I am conscious of it that secresy is of great importance in the present state of the business, till the minds of you, your brother bishops and Mr. Wesley be circumstantially known. I must therefore beg that these things be confined to yourself and Dr. Magaw, till I have the honor of seeing you.

Thus you see that I have made a bold venture on your honor, and candor, and have opened my whole heart to you on the subject as far as the extent of a small letter will allow me. If you put equal confidence in me, you will find me candid and faithful.

I have, notwithstanding, been guilty of inadvertencies. Very lately I found myself obliged (for the pacifying of my conscience) to write a penitential letter to the Rev. Mr. Jarratt, which gave him great satisfaction: and for the same reason I must write another to the Rev. Mr. Pettigrew.

When I was last in America, I prepared and corrected a great variety of things for our Magazine, indeed almost every thing that was printed, except some loose hints which I had taken of one of my journeys, and which I left in my hurry with Mr. Asbury, without any correction, intreating him that no part of them might be printed which could be improper or offensive. But through great inadvertency (I suppose) he suffered some reflections on the characters of the two above mentioned gentlemen to be inserted in the Magazine, for which I am very sorry: and probably shall not rest till I have made my acknowledgments more public; though Mr. Jarrat does not desire it.

I am not sure, whether I have not also offended you, sir, by accepting one of the offers made me by you and Dr. Magaw of the use of your churches, about six years ago, on my first visit to Philadelphia, without informing you of *our plan of separation from the Church of England*. If I did offend, (as I doubt I did, especially from what you said to Mr. Richard Dallam of Abington) I sincerely beg yours and Dr. Magaw's pardon. I'll endeavor to amend. But alas! I am a frail, weak creature.

I will intrude no longer at present. One thing only I will claim from your candor—that if you have no thoughts of improving this proposal, you will burn this letter, and take no more notice of it, (for it would be a pity to have us entirely alienated

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from each other, if we cannot unite in the manner my ardent wishes desire) but if you will further negotiate the business, I will explain my mind still more fully to you on the probabilities of success.

In the mean time permit me, with great respect to subscribe myself,

Right Reverend Sir,

Your very humble servant in Christ.

(Signed)

THOMAS COKE.

Richmond, April 24th, 1791.

The right Reverend.

Father in God, Bishop White.

P. S. You must excuse interlineations, &c. as I am just going into the country and have no time to transcribe.

NOTE, by the author of the *Pamphlet*:

To prevent mistakes, the reader is desired to observe: that the testimony contained in bishop White's first letter in the last chapter, is drawn from the conversation that took place at the personal interview between the bishop, Dr. Coke and Dr. Magaw. And also, it must be remarked that the testimony contained in the second is chiefly from Dr. Coke's letter, with a more explicit account of what was meant by some passages in the first. *See the respective letters.*

No. 3.

AN extract from "*Myles's Chronological History of Methodism*," p's. 75. & 76.

"In the beginning of the year 1763, a Greek bishop visited London. Mr. Wesley made enquiry concerning the reality of his office, and was fully satisfied that he was a *true bishop*."

—"Mr. Wesley then applied to him to ordain Dr. Jones, in order to assist him in administering the Lord's supper to his societies, which he did."

Myles draws this conclusion among others, from this fact.—"That Mr. Wesley thought no person should administer the ordinances of God without ordination." And we shall draw also another conclusion, viz. That Mr. Wesley esteemed the imposition of the hands of a *true bishop* essential to ordination. And it ought to be further noticed, that that bishop, whose name was Erasmus, did not understand English, nor Mr. Wesley's candidates Greek.

Myles further informs, us, that, "some others of the preachers, travelling and local, got Erasmus to ordain them. *This displeased Mr. Wesley very much; and those of them who would*

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"not lay aside acting as clergymen independent of him, were excluded from the connection."

There is certainly a striking contrast in the spirit of this action, and that of his ordaining Dr. Coke, who was a presbyter, to *fuller powers*. In the one case, he has not power to ordain a presbyter, but is glad to apply to a Greek bishop for the purpose; and this in violation of the oath of supremacy he took at his own ordination. In the other, without receiving any additional authority, either ordinary or extraordinary, he pretended to a conviction, from the reading of a book, whose author understood not the subject well, on which he wrote, that he had an authority, and actually assumed the authority, not only to ordain presbyters, which was the utmost *that book* would have held him out in; but even to give to presbyters *fuller powers*; and to send them as bishops superior to, and distinct from presbyters, to a distant quarter of the globe. If these actions argue consistency; I know not what sort of conduct can be called inconsistent.

No. 4.

EXTRACT from "*Myles Chronological history of the Methodists*, p's. 98 & 99.

"Q. But how can we encourage the women in the bands to speak, since it is a shame for a woman to speak in the Church?
"1. Cor. 14, 35.

"A. I deny, 1. that *speaking* in that passage means any other than speaking as a public teacher. This St. Paul suffered not, because it implied *usurping authority over the man*. 1. Tim. 2, 12. Whereas *no authority* either over man or woman is usurped by the speaking now in question. I deny, 2. That *the church* in that text means any other than the great congregation.

"Women have at different times and places acted as leaders (mostly as leaders of classes wherein there were no men) and generally they have been very useful in that office."——

I should be glad to have this proved, as well as asserted. *'Tis hurtful, not useful, to propagate schism.* "—— A very few women have also at different times acted as public preachers."—— *St. Paul's prohibition being disregarded.* "A letter from Mr. Wesley to one of these (Miss Bosanquet, the present Mrs. Fletcher of Madely,) shews that *he thought* it might be suffered in some cases" notwithstanding St. Paul suffered it not.

LONDONDERRY, JUNE 13th, 1771.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"I think the strength of the cause rests there, in your having an extraordinary call. So I am persuaded has all the lay-

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“preachers : otherwise I could not countenance their preaching at all. It is plain to me the whole work of God termed Methodism, is an extraordinary dispensation of his providence.” *How know you it to be the work of God Mr. Wesley ?* as plain as the matter appears to you, it is full as plain to others, not a whit behind you in learning and piety, that Methodism is not the work of God, but the work of a turbulent, disobedient and schismatical spirit—but to continue the letter—“Therefore I do not wonder, if several things occur therein which do not fall under the ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul’s ordinary rule was, *I permit not a woman to speak in the Church*, yet in the extraordinary cases, he made a few exceptions, at Corinth in particular.” Easily asserted, but not so easily proved ; and if proved, would not answer *your* purpose. “I am, my dear Sister, your affectionate brother.”

“JOHN WESLEY.”

Myles proceeds on and says, some persons “it is to be feared, have acted in this way, whose call was very disputable. Lest such should be encouraged by this letter, let it be remembered, that it was written to a *very eminent* woman, who never abused the extraordinary call which she believed she had received, to any unworthy purpose.” So then the whole weight of evidence of *her* extraordinary call rests upon *her own bare belief*. Indeed, Mr. Myles, this is very insufficient testimony.

In the above letter of Mr. Wesley to Mrs. Fletcher, a most dangerous principle is advanced. A pretended extraordinary call, without any sufficient evidence to establish it such, is produced as an excuse for a gross violation of scriptural and apostolic order, and, I may add, of a divine command : for the apostles, we know, acted in all things relating to the worship and doctrine of Christianity, by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost.—Let Mr. Wesley’s principle be received, and all obedience to God’s commands may be avoided, by every pretender to an extraordinary call. He may obey them, or not obey them, as he supposes his call directs. If Methodism be the work of God & an extraordinary dispensation of his providence, its evidences ought to be produced—not the number of its proselytes, but such evidences, as proved the religion which Christ and his apostles founded and taught, to be a true religion, as it stood distinguished from the religion of the law of Moses which it superceded. The inspiration of the sacred writers has been confirmed by undoubted miracles, and no evidence short of miracles equally illustrious, can justify us in contravening any of their provisions, or disobeying in any single instance what they have left upon record, as commands. To him who adopts Mr. Wesley’s principle, the scriptures must be, not only a dead letter, but an obsolete and useless collection of historical facts and maxims unworthy of attention, since every pretender to an extraordinary call may

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receive them, or not receive them, as his rule of conduct, according as his own whim directs, or, as he may judge will best promote the object he had in view; and, we should be deprived of that infallible rule they afford, of trying all doctrines and spirits, whether they are of God.

Mr. Wesley's sentiment in the foregoing letter is one proof, among many others, which might be produced, that Methodism cannot bear examination; and, therefore, its founder and inventor declares, that it is not subject in all things to the ordinary rules of discipline laid down in holy scripture! This decree of the Methodist apostle and pontiff contains one of the most bold and impious of all principles, it amounts to an attack upon the grand charter of man's salvation. The gnostics and the legion of heresiarchs of all ages combined never exceeded this!

But, says Mr. Wesley. St. Paul made some exceptions, at Corinth in particular. I have read both his epistles to the Corinthians with some degree of serious attention, and cannot find any exceptions made which could justify Mrs. Fletcher, in assuming the functions of a public preacher. But, supposing St. Paul had made some exceptions, we must recollect that St. Paul's calling was *unequivocally an extraordinary one*; it was confirmed by miracles, he was guided and directed by the immediate revelation of Jesus Christ, he was truly inspired by the Holy Ghost, and the other apostles were so well satisfied of all this, that they readily gave unto him, the right hand of fellowship. Now, whenever it is proved that the late Rev. John Wesley was truly an extraordinary messenger of God, by evidence great as that which convinced the apostles of Christ, that St. Paul was truly commissioned from on high; I will retract all I have said, wrote, or delivered respecting him; I will acknowledge him a true apostle; I will beg pardon of God and the world, for all I have said or done against Methodism; I will submit to whatever penance Mr. Asbury and the conference may please to impose upon me; I will reverence his pretensions as the voice of God; I will acknowledge Mr. Asbury to be a true bishop, and successor of an apostle, and that all the Methodist elders and deacons are priests and deacons in the Church of God—but not till then. And, in the mean time, I shall take the liberty of examining both the pretensions of Mr. Wesley, and those of all other wonder-working Methodists, by those rules which the scripture affords. Nor, shall I be afraid of calling Methodism an imposition on the world, a human device, a schism, and a promoter of the cause of infidelity; while I find myself justified in doing so, by comparing the principles and practices of Methodism with the word of God; nor shall I regard Mr. Wesley's letter to Mrs. Fletcher, wherein, he calls Methodism the work of God, and an extraordinary dispensation of his providence.

END OF APPENDIX.

Read June 1-18 1834 John
"The more they were afflicted
The more they multiplied
& grew"

Methodism..

